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SPORT & WILD LIFE IN THE DECCAN

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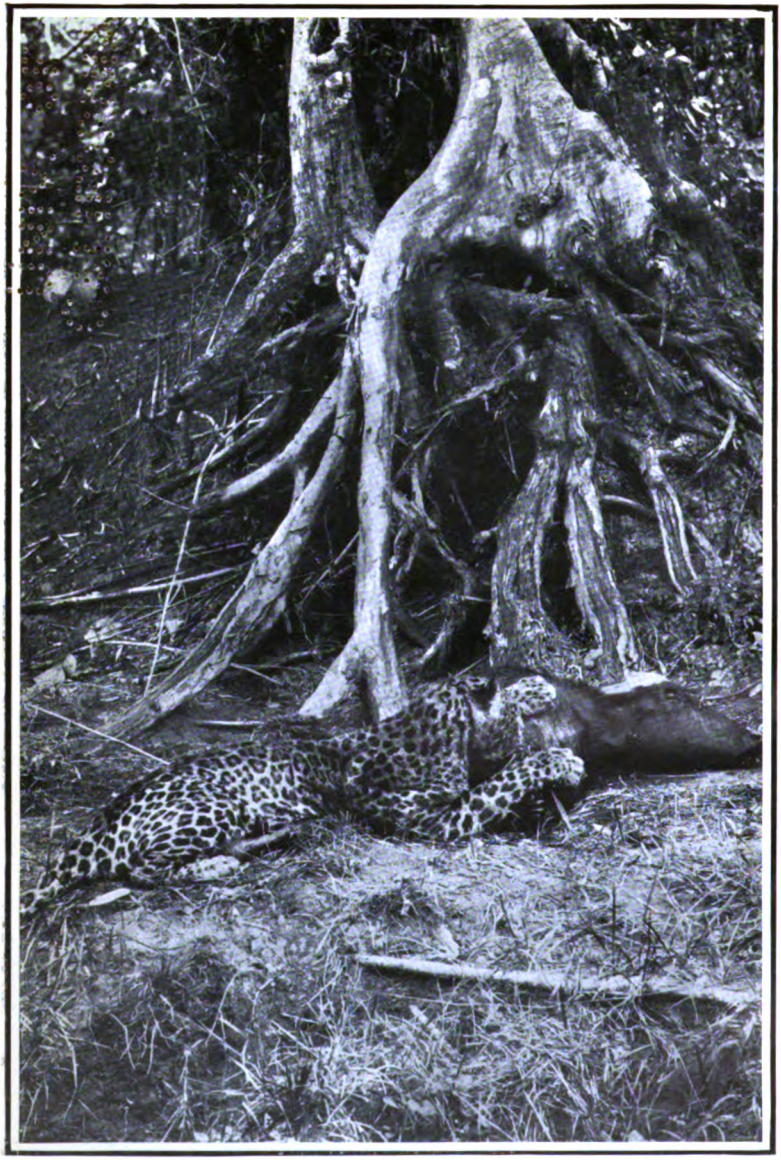

LEOPARD AND KILL

The leopard often preys on young buffaloes, as here depicted, on goats and dogs, and not infrequently on human beings.

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SPORT & WILD LIFE IN THE DECCAN

AN ACCOUNT OF BIG-GAME HUNTING DURING NEARLY FORTY YEARS OF SERVICE IN INDIA, WITH MUCH INTERESTING INFORMATION ON THE HABITS OF THE WILD ANIMALS OF THAT COUNTRY

BY

BRIGADIER-GENERAL R. G. BURTON

Author of
"The History of the Hyderabad Contingent" "Wellington's Campaigns in India" "Napoleon's Invasions of Russia" "Napoleon's Campaigns in Italy" &c. &c.

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"It is the voice of the years that are gone; they roll before me with all their deeds."—OSSIAN

TO MY
AUNT

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To the
Memory of my Brother
ARTHUR ROBERT
brave soldier and gallant gentleman, friend and
companion of my youth, who has passed
away into the Great Silence
this book is dedicated

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FOREWORD

My acknowledgments are due to *The Nineteenth Century*, *Fortnightly Review*, *National Review*, *The Field*, *The Pioneer*, *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, and other publications in which some of the material contained in these volumes has been published.

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CHAPTER ONE

Hyderabad

"Our youth is like the dream of the hunter on the hill of heath."
OSSIAN.

IN the year 1839 my father, the late General E. F. Burton, sailed for India, where he spent the best part of the next forty-four years of his life. He was a keen sportsman and naturalist, and embodied an account of his experiences of jungle life in his book, *Reminiscences of Sport in India*. It seems to me not unfitting that his son, who inherited his love of sport and natural history, should continue a family record of reminiscences in the jungles which he loved so well. He ranged, for the most part, the Deccan south of the Godavery, while the present volume deals with the country to the north of that river.

The period dealt with in this volume may be taken as one of transition between the present and the past —to which my father's book relates. It was a period when the old muzzle-loading weapons had been discarded, during which the Express rifle, with its black powder, was still in use, and had not yet given way to the modern long-ranging, high-velocity weapon of such extreme accuracy that skill and woodcraft in approaching game in open country are less requisite to-day. There has been a change in other respects. I used to ride seventy miles across country to my camp on the Pein Gunga on my annual tiger-hunting expeditions from Hingoli, and the camp had to be sent on a week

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ahead; now no doubt the distance can be covered by car in a few hours.

The cantonments, in which I spent many happy years, were from thirty to a hundred miles from the railway, and in their social and military life retained the features of their first establishment over a hundred years ago. They are now on the line of rail, or have been abandoned for ever under new conditions of political and military organisation. The very force in which I served, known as the Hyderabad Contingent, whose history presents many features of romantic interest, has disappeared owing to fresh arrangements with the ruler of Hyderabad. Its existence, as will be gathered from these pages, related to a past order of things. The Hyderabad Contingent was organised at a time when strong local forces were essential to reduce to order a turbulent country in those "good old days" when no man's life or property was safe from marauding bands.

In the leisure of retirement, after nearly forty years' service, it is a pleasure to recall happy days in the Indian jungles, to follow in the track of one who went before, and whom in due course—and it cannot be many years now—I shall rejoin in the "Happy Hunting Grounds," where, let us hope with Frank Buckland, "we shall meet with many interesting animals." Before entering the jungles it may be well to explain why I have chosen to mingle historical records with reminiscences of sport and wild life in the Deccan, or South of India. I once wrote for an Indian newspaper a series of articles, entitled "Sport and Battlefields," which may seem an unusual combination. Certainly sport has been described as "The Image of War," and in a chapter of this volume a tiger-hunting expedition has been

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compared with a military campaign. But this idea was not in my mind in selecting the subjects of my book.

During my service in India I was much engaged in historical work, and wrote nine or ten volumes of military history, including half-a-dozen for the Government of India. My attention was first attracted to historical study by the scenes of famous battles and campaigns which it was my fortune to come upon during many shooting expeditions. Descriptions of battlefields and the events with which they were connected led to research into the history of campaigns. This was particularly the case with regard to the battlefields of Assaye, Argaum and Gawilgarh, which recall the name and the early achievements in India of the greatest of English soldiers, the lustre of whose glory is undimmed by the passing of one hundred and twenty-five years.

There were also other campaigns and more obscure operations of the nature of local frays and forays in which the Hyderabad Contingent was concerned in its work of pacification of a turbulent region in the early half of the last century. It seemed fitting, therefore, that this book should deal with those pursuits—sport, natural history and military history—which filled the activities of so many of the best years of my life, and on which I look back with so great a pleasure, and with so poignant a regret that they can never be renewed. Some detailed accounts of personal experiences in pursuit of game are given, as these may be of use to novices and may help them to avoid mistakes. In some of the tiger-hunting episodes two of my brothers were associated with me on different expeditions.

In order to understand the operations of both war

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and sport, it is essential to have some knowledge of the geography of Hyderabad. The limits of the dominions of the Nizam, including the Berars, have varied at different periods of the existence of the state, which at one time formed an appanage of the Mughal Emperors of Delhi, from whom the Nizams derived their power as Viceroys of the Deccan, and formerly extended to a line nearly north and south from Barhanpur on the Tapti to Cape Comorin, and eastwards from that line to the sea. But portions of this area have from time to time been ceded to the English, or detached by the aggressions of the Mahratta and other predatory powers until the state was reduced to its present dimensions. It is still the greatest of the states of India, and its ruler is the leading Prince.

Hyderabad, by reason of its physical features, its history and its monuments, is not surpassed by any of the dominions ruled over by the princes of India. Its picturesque and romantic character is enhanced by its productions—animal, vegetable and mineral; by the history of a thousand years before the English era; by gigantic caves and temples, carved out of solid rock, whose origins are lost in the mist of time; and finally by the story of battles and sieges, in which English blood was freely shed in protecting the dominions of a prince whose long and happy relations with us led to his being termed, more than seventy years ago, "Our Faithful Ally, the Nizam."

The state consists in general of an elevated plateau, some eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, and enjoys, in consequence, a comparatively equable climate. The heat is great from March to May or June, according to the incidence of the monsoon, when the

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thermometer may register 110 degrees or more in the shade, but there is no extreme cold as in the north of India; while in the rainy season cool and refreshing breezes blow across the uplands. The climate is pleasant from November to February, although the sun is always hot. The Deccan plateau is broken by ranges of rugged mountains and watered by several great rivers and their tributaries. The northern boundary is formed by the Tapti river, which, breaking through the mountain masses and dense jungles of the Satpuras, flows through Western India and pours its waters into the Gulf of Cambay. South of this river a tumbled mass of forest-clad hills rises to peaks, nearly four thousand feet above sea-level, their outlying buttresses being crowned by the fortresses of Asirgarh, Narnala and Gawilgarh, which, built of massive stone, stand like sentinels guarding the passes to the north.

Below these hills to the south stretches the fertile valley of Berar, whose south-west border and the boundary of Khandesh, with which it marches, are marked by a spur of the Western Ghauts, through which several passes give access alike to the wild country of the aboriginal Bhils, a tribe famous in the early days of James Outram, the "Bayard of India," and to the cultivated plains of East Berar. The spur is crossed by the passes of Kesari, Ajanta and Rajura, so often traversed by Wellesley's forces in the campaign of 1803. To the south, again, a low range of hills stretches from Aurangabad to the abandoned military station of Jalna.

Across the centre of the state the Godavery river, issuing from the Western Ghauts and receiving many streams in its course, rolls through fertile plains until

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it enters the dense jungles of Nirmal, whose principal inhabitants are predaceous animals, and from thence flows in an easterly direction to Sironcha before turning to the south to mark the eastern limits of the state. South of the Godavery the hilly and forest regions continue through the districts of Elgandal, Medak and Warangal, until they give place to fertile areas watered by streams and by the artificial lakes which, together with granitic rocks piled in grotesque confusion, are the characteristic features of this part of the country.

Ethnographically, Hyderabad may be divided roughly into two portions—the northern part, including Berar, belonging to Maharashtra, the country of the Mahrattas, whose name alone is enough to conjure up scenes of frays and forays, while the southern districts comprise Telingana, the region inhabited by the mild and peaceable Telingas. But there are many other races within the state. The aboriginal Korkus inhabit the Satpura Hills, where they wrest a precarious living from the produce of the forest. Their place is taken by the kindred Gonds in the forests of Nirmal and on the banks of the Wardha river, where Gond rajas still keep up a petty state in the domains of their ancestors. Muhammadans of the Pathan or Mughal races, and the descendants of those who were converted to Islam, are settled in nearly every town or village, forming communities which have for several generations supplied soldiers to the state. Rohillas, bearing a character for truculence, may be known by their fair complexions and distinctive dress, which is the same as that of their Pathan relations of the North-West Frontier. At Nander, on the Godavery, where Guru Govind received his death-wound, a considerable Sikh colony has raised

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an edifice second only in sanctity to the Golden Temple of Amritsar. Arabs, formerly in the service of the Mahrattas as mercenaries, principally as garrisons of forts, which they defended with desperate valour, are to be found in many places, particularly in Hyderabad city, where they still supply a corps in the service of the Nizam. Brinjaras—grain-carriers of nomadic habits, and famous as the suppliers of armies in the constant wars of bygone days—wander over the country with their numerous flocks, pitching their tents where they can find pasture for their animals according to the season of the year, and at times settling in hamlets which have frequently a more or less ephemeral existence.

In Hindu mythology the forests of the Godavery are supposed to be those in which Rama and Sita of the *Mahabharata* wandered in peace and happiness until Sita was abducted to Ceylon, and to which she returned after her rescue by Hanuman, King of the Monkeys. Two thousand years ago the kingdom of the great Asoka, whose inscriptions enshrining words of wisdom still adorn the columns he erected in various parts of the country, extended into the Deccan. Deogiri, with its scarped and rock-hewn fort, entered by a passage in the bowels of the earth, from which the defenders poured boiling oil on assailants through apertures which still exist, formed the capital of a Hindu kingdom until it was overrun by the Muhammadan Emperor of Delhi some eight hundred years ago. Not far from Deogiri, known to Musalmans as Daulatabad, the enormous images of the Ellora caves, carved out of solid rock, excite the wonder and interest of mankind, and in the neighbourhood is Aurangabad, one of the chief cities of the state.

The fauna of Hyderabad is of remarkable interest

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and variety. In suitable localities is to be found almost every kind of game, large and small, that inhabits peninsular India. Tigers are widespread and numerous; panthers or leopards are common in most parts of the state, both in the great forests and in the low, bush-clad hills, where they haunt the neighbourhood of villages in search of prey. The hunting leopard, one of the rarest of animals, and generally seen only in a state of captivity, when it is employed in the chase of antelope, exists among the rocky hills of Berar, and the scarce red lynx or caracal also is found. Black bears are numerous, living in caves or on the bamboo-clad slopes of the hills; there were even a few wild elephants in the Pakhal Lake district, said to have escaped from Sindhia's defeated army after the battle of Assaye in 1803. Gigantic oxen, properly called gaur, but known to Indian sportsmen as bison, roam the Satpura Hills and other suitable localities where these solitude-loving animals are not disturbed by the presence of man. The deer include the sambar, spotted deer, barking deer and the little mouse-deer, while the antelope comprise the nilgai, Indian antelope, four-horned antelope and gazelle. Wolves, wild dogs, jackals and foxes are everywhere plentiful in suitable localities, and the striped hyena is a useful scavenger, though it has a predilection for destroying donkeys and goats. Hares are common, and there are many small animals — badgers, civets, mongooses, bats, flying and other squirrels, and the strange-looking pangolin—of interest to the naturalist. The feathered game include pea-fowl, partridges of two species, many kinds of sand-grouse and quail, jungle-fowl, spur-fowl, great bustard, florican, as well as duck, snipe and other water-fowl in due season.

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GAME ANIMALS OF THE DECCAN

The principal animals found in South India. The mighty elephant stems the river and the tiger roars upon the bank. Bears are under a gold mohur tree, a stag stands beside bamboos, while bison, leopard and wild goat survey the scene from above.
(From a water-colour by General E. F. Burton, father of the author of this book.)

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CHAPTER TWO

Historical

"Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour and went his way."

OMAR KHAYYÁM.

WHILE the physical character, the human and other inhabitants, and the sport afforded by this splendid region offer so many attractions, its history, over which is cast the glamour of a thousand years of vicissitudes and romance, presents features of extraordinary interest. In 1326 the Emperor Muhammad bin Tughlak, wishing to move his capital to Deogiri, ordered the evacuation of Delhi and the migration of its inhabitants to the Deccan. It is related that on the appointed day all the people left, with the exception of a blind man and a lame one. This being discovered, the amiable Emperor caused the blind man to be executed and the cripple to be dragged to Deogiri, seven hundred miles distant, chained to the foot of an elephant; only one leg arrived at its destination.

While Deogiri was the chief city of a kingdom in the north of the state, the kingdom of Golconda, the ruins of whose capital are to be seen to this day in the vicinity of Hyderabad, was ruled over by the Kutb Shahi kings from 1507 until its subjugation by Aurangzeb in 1687. That monarch changed the name of Deogiri to Aurangabad, and built there a tomb, modelled after the famous Taj Mahal of Agra, in memory of his

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daughter. After the capture of Golconda the state of Hyderabad was established as a province of the Mughal Empire under the administration of a viceroy, and the dynasty of the present Nizam was founded by the famous Nizam-ul-Mulk.

In October 1723 Nizam-ul-Mulk shook off the yoke of the declining Mughal Empire, which was falling into ruins under the assaults of the Mahrattas, and established himself in virtual independence of the throne of Delhi. But until the final dissolution of the Mughal Empire, in 1857, the fiction of subordination to Delhi was maintained, and the Nizams retained the inscription of the Mughal on their coinage and called themselves " Servants of the Emperor."

In the middle of the eighteenth century the struggle for supremacy in Southern India began between the French and English, and Hyderabad, which then included Masulipatam, the Carnatic, and the districts known as the Northern Circars, was drawn into the area of contention. This struggle was contemporaneous with varying relations of hostility or friendship between the Nizam and the English or French, according to the ascendancy of one or the other European Power, and it was intimately related to wars with the Muhammadan rulers of Mysore and with the princes of the Mahratta Confederacy.

It was in Hyderabad that the great Frenchman Dupleix first came into prominence in the days of those military adventurers of Hindustan who belong to an heroic age, among whom, at Hyderabad, was the French adventurer, Raymond, whose tomb is venerated to this day, and the Irish dragoon, Finglas, whose descendants still serve the Nizam.

Dupleix first established French influence by espous-

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ing the cause of a claimant to the throne. In 1753 his colleague, Bussy, was received in state by the Nizam at Aurangabad, French influence was established, and a body of troops of that nation installed in the state, while Masulipatam and other territories were made over to them. Three years later war between the English and French in Europe reacted on the peace of India, where hostilities took the form of one party supporting particular native powers against those supported by the other. During this struggle Robert Clive, having escaped from Fort St George, entered upon the military career which was to be productive of so much glory to the English arms and so much disaster to the French. During the war Masulipatam was taken by the English, whose relations with the Nizam became more cordial, and a Resident was established at his Court.

The struggle with the French led to English predominance, due to success in war and diplomacy. But some estrangement arose between the English and the Nizam in 1795, when the latter expected, but did not receive, assistance in the war with the Mahrattas, which ended in the disastrous defeat of his army at Kardla. In this battle Raymond's corps, 7000 strong, organised in two regiments, under French officers, took part; they had served in the Mysore war of 1792, and had increased in strength until they became a serious rival to English interests, which were represented by the Resident and by two battalions of white troops, stationed at Hyderabad as a subsidiary force. The Hyderabad army at the battle of Kardla included the famous corps of Amazons, who did not behave worse than the remainder of the troops in that inglorious action. They formed two battalions, each 1000 strong,

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named the Zafar Paltan, or Victorious Regiment, but it is not related whether they earned that distinguished title by the glory of their deeds, or whether it was merely a tribute to what should have been the gentler sex. They have long since been disbanded and returned to their proper avocation, the place of muskets on their shoulders being taken by smiling infants.

The Nizam, taking umbrage at the absence of assistance during this war, dispensed with the services of the two English battalions, which thereupon marched back into British territory. From this moment the French began to regain a dangerous ascendancy at the Court of the Nizam, which was rendered more menacing owing to the position held by military adventurers in the service of Sindhia. Raymond's corps rose to a strength of 14,000 men — who bore the colours of the French Republic and had the Cap of Liberty engraved upon their buttons—organised in ten battalions, with a train of thirty guns and a park of forty pieces of ordnance.

The English Government beheld with apprehension the recrudescence of French influence with the Nizam. That prince, however, declared his readiness to dismiss the French Corps provided the English subsidiary force was increased and its services made available for the defence of his dominions. This was considered inadvisable, owing to the desire of the English to continue on good terms with the Mahrattas. Instead, the entrance of English adventurers into the service of the Nizam to counterbalance the French was encouraged, but the project failed owing to the lack of anyone with ability to rival the astute Raymond and his successor.

At this juncture Lord Mornington arrived in India as Governor-General, firmly imbued with the determina-

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tion to destroy French influence. First came a settlement with Tipu, Sultan of Mysore. This autocratic prince was not only in correspondence with Napoleon Bonaparte, then commanding the French Army of the Orient in Egypt, a letter from whom to Tipu was intercepted, but had summoned a French political mission to his capital. This mission had arrived from the island of Mauritius, had been received by the Sultan, and, inspired by the revolutionary fanaticism of the times, had founded a Jacobin Club at Seringapatam, planted a Tree of Liberty surmounted by a Cap of Equality, and hailed as "Citizen Tipu" the most bigoted and bloodthirsty despot who ever sat upon a throne.

As war with Mysore was inevitable, it was feared that the French at Hyderabad might attempt to seize the Nizam's dominions and secure them to the domination of France, or that, if the French Corps were brought into the field against Tipu, they might endanger the cause of the allied English and Hyderabad Governments. With some trouble, and mainly through the tact and influence of Captain, afterwards Sir John, Malcolm, the French Corps was disbanded, and a contingent of the Nizam's troops took the field with the English army when it marched to the siege of Seringapatam under General Harris. It was here that the connection of the greatest of English soldiers with Hyderabad began, for Arthur Wellesley, Lieutenant-Colonel of the 33rd Foot, took command of the Hyderabad forces for the campaign which ended in the death of Tipu and the subjugation of his kingdom in 1799.

The subsequent history of Hyderabad is of considerable importance in its reactions on the English connection with the state. It is closely bound up with the

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perennial Berar question, which cannot yet be said to be laid at rest for ever, and with the history of the local Hyderabad Contingent, now merged into the Regular Indian army.

The pacification of the state was due entirely to the work of this force, which was constantly engaged in active operations from its formation, under European officers, in 1813 until 1860. In the Mahratta and Pindari war the Nizam's contingent was employed with Sir Thomas Hislop's army of the Deccan, a portion being present at the battle of Mehidpur, the capture of Nagpur, and the siege of Malegaon, as well as in desultory operations in pursuit of the Peshwa, Baji Rao and various bodies of Pindaris.

When the mutiny of the Bengal army broke out, in 1857, trouble was feared in Hyderabad, and turbulent elements attacked the British Residency, but they were repelled by the fire of a few guns. At Aurangabad there was a slight *émeute* in one cavalry regiment, which was sternly suppressed, the ringleaders being executed. But in 1858 the Hyderabad Contingent performed admirable service with the Malwa field force, and marched through Central India with Sir Hugh Rose's army, fighting many actions and helping to capture the strongholds of Jhansi, Kalpi and Gwalior. The cavalry in particular, which Lord Gough characterised as "the best irregular cavalry in the world," rendered such conspicuous service that Sir Hugh Rose termed it "the wings of my army."

It is recorded that when the cavalry was organised for operations against the Pindaris in 1813, and the Governor of Berar inquired "who would serve the English," a famous officer, the Nawab Murteza Yar

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Jung, was the first to rise in the Durbar and, laying his hand upon his sword, volunteered to do so with heart and hand, and said: "Listen, Maharaj! You ask who will serve the English? I am a soldier of fortune; all that I require is food for my men and corn for my horses, nor much of either. These the English have never denied to those who serve them faithfully, and I am ready to serve them and to march on the instant wheresoever they may command. All countries are alike to Murteza Yar Jung." He was true to his word; and until the day of his death, in 1830, his majestic and soldier-like form, attesting through many a deep scar the part he played on well-fought fields, was ever at the post of danger, setting an animating example to his men. That is the spirit which has always animated the best elements in the King-Emperor's Indian army.

It is unfortunate that political exigencies led to the abolition of the Hyderabad Contingent as a local force, for its presence was an element of stability, and the officers exercised a beneficial influence on our relations with the state. Those relations are perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the career of Colonel Meadows Taylor, the famous author of *The Confessions of a Thug*, a book which was written in a bungalow at Ellichpur which I occupied forty years ago.

It is perhaps not fair to judge of the efficacy of political institutions while they are in a state of transition, but there are generally happier conditions in Indian states than in British territory. In those states the people have not been aroused out of the pathetic contentment which has preserved in the Indian country-side an Arcadian and happy simplicity which may well be the envy of less contented peoples in every part of

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the world. They have not had opened out to their view, as have the people of British India, vision of the political turmoil, social unhappiness, bitterness and discontent that are presented by Western political institutions. It is permissible to believe that the best method of giving self-government to India would be by extending the limits of the native states rather than by the institution of a nominal form of democracy.

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CHAPTER THREE

Wild Life in the Satpura Hills

"You should have heard him speak of what he loved; of the tent pitched beside the talking water; of the stars overhead at night; of the blest return of morning."—R. L. STEVENSON.

FROM earliest childhood I determined to go to India and shoot tigers, and it was with pleasurable anticipations that I entered a service in which those hopes might be realised. The pleasures of big-game hunting, with its proper accompaniment of natural history in the observation of the habits of wild animals, are enhanced by the geographical environment. That influence may not be the same for all men. The desert surroundings of North-West India and Baluchistan have a great attraction for many lonely souls, as I myself have experienced in the desolate mountains of the Zhob Valley. For others there is a pleasure in the pathless woods, in vast primeval forests, or on the teeming plains of Africa. Some find an irresistible attraction in the gigantic heights of the Himalayas, on mountains clad with dark pine-woods, rising to the white solitudes of eternal snow and the windswept deserts of the Roof of the World. Grand and imposing; though softer scenes are found in the Blue Mountains of Southern India, whose sides are clothed with forests of wonderful density and luxuriance, whose peaks pierce the azure sky and look down on fleecy clouds floating in the valleys below and on plains that shimmer in the torrid heat in the distance; cascades drop from

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their heights for hundreds of feet and pour away in torrents to the plains; in the distance, again, purple mountains rise like a gigantic wall, and far, far below mighty elephants can be distinguished moving in the depths of primeval jungle. But none of these regions can compare with the Satpura Hills where they overlook the smiling and fertile valley of Berar.

Perhaps in the days of one's youth things are seen through rose-coloured spectacles; certainly the forests of the Satpuras, as I look back upon them, rise like a mirage through the mists of time and appear as much like an earthly paradise as anything can be in this unsatisfactory world. Viewed from a distance, the hills seem to rise abruptly from the plains below, but as one approaches their outskirts they are seen to swell with a series of gentle undulations from fields of corn and millet, dotted with herds of antelope. The low hills were clad with scanty bush jungle, the haunt of numerous gazelle and pea-fowl, while the ravines, that ran far into the wilds, afforded a safe retreat for panthers, hyenas, bears, and many birds and beasts, the tiger himself sometimes descending from remoter fastnesses to prey on the cattle of the neighbouring hamlets. Here one could pass idyllic days in pursuit of the gazelle that dance ahead and draw one on for miles in the hope of getting a shot. In the same country good bags of feathered game could be made, and there were black buck, great bustard, wolves and nilgai, with the chance of meeting a panther or a sloth bear in the early morning.

But this was only the fringe of the great forests, in which were a variety and quantity of game sufficient to satisfy the heart of any hunter and naturalist. There were herds of mighty bison, and although tigers

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were not numerous, there was a fair number of the most splendid of all animals. Sambar were numerous, the old stags bearing antlers unsurpassed in any part of India; whilst barking deer and four-horned antelope were in every glade and thicket. Blue bull were plentiful, and so were panthers, bears, pigs and wild dogs, as well as a variety of lesser beasts. Spotted deer were to be found on the banks of the Tapti, which was inhabited by otters, crocodiles and immense fish.

The forest was of great variety, mainly teak and bamboo, interspersed with tall ebony and other trees, and during the rainy season and the early days of the cold weather so dense that one had little chance of seeing game. But with the advent of the hot weather the jungle was thinned out; the grass dried up and the trees shed their leaves, so that one could see the smallest animals rustling among the dry leaves which covered the ground and rendered stalking difficult. Tigers were not easy to bag, owing to the abundance of water, which enabled them to wander far and wide, and to the evergreen covers of jamun and tamarisk in the river-beds; whilst it was almost impossible to obtain beaters from the sparse and scattered hamlets, inhabited by aboriginal Korkus, who wrested a precarious living from these jungle solitudes.

The best sport was to be had by rising long before dawn and wandering forth to some favourite hunting-ground with two or three jungle-men. A good locality would thus be reached by dawn. One would move silently through the forest for many miles, visiting waterholes and picking up the tracks of the wild beasts that had frequented them during the night or in the early morning to slake their thirst. In this manner I

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came to know a considerable part of the forest and learned to recognise the localities haunted by various kinds of wild animals; and although I have made larger bags of big game since those days, I have never experienced more pleasure in jungle life than in the enchanted forests of my youth.

But the game was not the only attraction. As has been said, the greatest pleasure of sport is in the surroundings. The mountains of the Melghat forest rise to nearly four thousand feet above the level of the sea and two thousand above the plain below. On the summits of the hills are broad plateaux, clad with tall prairie grass and giant teak-trees, and on the hillsides feathery bamboos rustle in the breeze. Between the hills the torrential rains of countless ages have worn deep ravines, where the game and its pursuer can find rest and shade and water during the burning hours of the day. On the distant confines of the forest the Tapti river flows through tracts, in those days infested by wild beasts and rarely trodden by civilised man. Bears used to lie in the scanty shade afforded by the bamboos, where a fugitive breeze might sweep the slopes of the hills, and their concealment was assisted by the great black boulders that strewed the mountain-side, from which, being of similar shape, the hairy black animals could with difficulty be distinguished.

My first visit to the forest was at Christmas time, when the dank grass was waist-high and the jungle so dense that one seldom saw any animals, but only heard the deer as they rose from their forms and dashed off with a loud "Tonk!" into dense cover. I killed one stag and missed another, and sometimes caught a glimpse of brown bodies, but could not fire for fear of

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killing a hind. On my next visit, in March, the bag included a tigress, killed by my companion after a prolonged fight, and some sambar and jungle-fowl. This tigress had killed a buffalo a couple of miles from camp, and just as the sun was setting my companion shot her through the body when she was returning to the kill. Next morning we took a small pad-elephant and went to look for the wounded beast. A large piece of broken bone in a pool of blood showed where the tigress had lain for a considerable time. From this spot the tracks led into long grass towards a small ravine, where it was too dangerous to follow on foot. So the elephant was sent in with men, who threw stones into the cover, and at the first discharge the beast rushed out and sprang on to the elephant's head; fortunately she had a broken shoulder and was soon shaken off, when the elephant bolted, trumpeting loudly, while the tigress picked herself up, bravely charged in pursuit, and sprang on to the hindquarters of her foe. A vigorous kick sent her sprawling, and as she fell my companion put in a well-aimed shot, which sent her back to cover, where we then walked her up and found her at her last gasp. The elephant did not stop until it reached camp, some miles off.

At a place where a bear had killed a number of people I came upon this or another animal in the morning; it was deeply engaged, with snout and paws buried in an ant-hill, out of which it was scratching and sucking in the succulent contents. On receiving my shot, Bruin hurried off into thick jungle and there died. The villagers brought in the skin of a bear which they said had been fighting with a tiger. They found it badly wounded and scarcely able to get along, and finished

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it off with the aid of rocks and clubs. It is not uncommon for tigers, when pressed by hunger, to attack bears, and many such incidents have been recorded. On another occasion I found the remains of two that had been thus killed and devoured. One morning I started at dawn to look for bison, and at three o'clock in the afternoon came upon a large herd on a lofty plateau. They filed past at a distance of fifty yards, great beasts of a chestnut-colour, with white stockings; these were all cows, many with some species of starling perched on their backs, no doubt for the purpose of preying on the parasitic insects with which these animals are infested; egrets may be seen similarly occupied on domestic cattle—an additional reason for the protection of these plume-bearing birds, which thus perform a useful office. A few minutes later two great black bulls appeared at a considerable distance in another direction, but they were moving quickly and I was unable to obtain a shot. When crossing the same plateau next day I shot a boar out of an immense sounder of swine, which rustled through the leaves like wind, and must have numbered at least a hundred animals, judging by the time taken in passing. Then I put up two bears, at first mistaken for black rocks —an example of protective colour in black animals— but betrayed by the hair on their backs waving in the breeze, but I failed to bag them; in this expedition lack of success was due to want of experience.

A dusty road led for sixteen miles from the cantonment of Ellichpur, where Wellington encamped after the battle of Argaum in 1803, to the entrance of the forest that has been described. I used to send my men on a day ahead with guns and baggage, and ride out

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the first sixteen miles in the early morning. My men met me at the entrance to the forest, and the road from that point to the camp, sixteen miles farther on, offered opportunities of sport. Here the tracks of tigers were often to be seen, and one was in the habit of taking the bullocks out of passing carts. I sometimes travelled by bullock-cart in the hope of getting a shot, but the tiger did not put in an appearance. Tigers, like other animals, prefer to walk on a road or path, which makes it easy to pick up the tracks. On both sides of the forest road were many small deer and pea-fowl, with whose cries and the crowing of the grey jungle-fowl the thickets resounded.

Many miles farther on I pitched my camp in the heart of the jungle, where the only water in the neighbourhood was contained in a pool much frequented by wild beasts. At sunset I took up my position in a tree overlooking the water, in order to observe wild life and in the hope of a shot at a panther, as a brace of these animals were said to resort to it every evening. The first to come were birds which uttered a note resembling the pouring of water out of a narrow-necked bottle. As the sun sank the animals began to show themselves. A troop of langur monkeys, grey, with black hands and faces, came swinging or leaping from branch to branch, with strange antics and grimaces. They were alive to the proximity of danger, for they approached the water with every sign of fear, and the slightest sound, such as the rustling of a lizard in the dry leaves, sent them scampering back to the shelter of overhanging trees. Pea-fowl came down to drink, the cocks trailing their gorgeous tails, which glittered in the light of the setting sun. Jungle-cocks crowed defiance at one another from

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the neighbouring thickets, and bevies of painted quail ran down to the water's edge. The stars shone out; the moon rose and flooded the water with light. A ratel came down at midnight and swam about in the pool for some time, and a heavy-bodied animal came crashing through the jungle, but scented danger and kept away from the pool. After that I slept until dawn. As the sun rose a wild dog trotted down to the water, and I shot it while it was drinking, and so rid the jungle of a pest which does more harm than any of the great carnivora, for it hunts in packs and destroys vast numbers of deer, driving all animals out of the district it infests. The aboriginals extracted the liver of the dog for medicinal purposes, ascribing to it aphrodisiac properties, as they ascribe courage-giving virtue to the liver of the tiger.

Near my next camp I shot one of the finest specimens of a four-horned antelope that has been recorded, the anterior horns being two and a half inches in length; these horns are generally mere stumps or callosities, and frequently altogether absent, but good specimens are not uncommon in the Melghat forest. This small antelope is usually found singly or in pairs, but I have seen as many as four together. It stands about twenty-five inches in height, and is of a brownish colour, lighter underneath; the flesh is very good. It shares the thickets with the little chestnut-coloured kakar, or barking deer, which has similar habits. In the same neighbourhood I shot a big blue bull, which had in its back suppurating wounds, caused by a tiger's claws, and was in an emaciated condition.

Soon after sunrise one morning I came upon a bear in long grass, and had a snapshot as it was on the move.

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WILD BOAR

The great grey boar, one of the pluckiest of all wild animals, who will face man or tiger, confident in the protection of his courage and his formidable tushes

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The animal at once charged, and I shot it through the body at a distance of a few feet. A cub came galloping after, and I administered a kick in the stomach as it passed, when the beast dashed on and clawed one of my followers down the bare leg as he was scrambling up a tree.

In May the following year I revisited the forest for a fortnight, and on the third day sent on my camp and started an hour before sunrise, riding along a path through the jungle, while my gun-bearers marched behind. It was bright moonlight. We had not gone far when there was a rustling in the jungle by the wayside, and a bear rushed out at us, uttering angry growls. I was off my pony in a moment and seized my rifle, but the bear, fortunately perhaps, turned tail and fled without making good his charge, for it was very dark and one could not see more than a few yards. After this I always walked with rifle in hand when out before daybreak.

That morning I wandered over a wide extent of country without getting a shot, although I put up a rare little animal not before met with. This was a lesser civet cat. It was a spotted, yellowish animal, about three feet in length, and was on the ground, although said to have arboreal habits. At about ten o'clock we emerged on to a forest road two miles from my new camp, and came up with the baggage-carts. These were a little way ahead, and the goats were walking with them, when I saw a panther sitting up under a tree about eighty yards off. He evidently had been lying in the shade, and sat up on his haunches when he heard the goats bleating. I slipped off my pony and shot him through the head before he had time to move. This was a small, light animal, with

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the remains of a monkey in the stomach, which appeared to indicate that he was addicted to arboreal habits. The panther was placed on a cart and we went on to camp.

At midnight I was roused by my servants, who said that a bear, which they described as being "as big as a buffalo," had come down to drink at a trough close by. I seized my rifle and ran out barefooted, but was only in time to hear the bear moving away over the dead leaves in the shadow of the forest. Next night my bed was placed in view of the trough, which was visited by a panther, but I did not get a shot. On the following night a goat was picketed out as bait, but in the night it fell into the well and was hanged by the rope which secured it. I afterwards sat up in a tree over a goat's carcass to watch for this panther, but the moon became obscured by an eclipse about midnight, and I went to sleep and did not awake until morning, when it was found that the panther had made a meal while I slumbered above in the tree.

During the next two days I explored a valley in which the stream had shrunk to a silver thread, flowing over a stony bed. It looked a paradise for game, and the tree trunks bore marks where the stags had been rubbing the velvet from their antlers. Still, it was almost destitute of game, a phenomenon accounted for when I met with a large pack of wild dogs in the dry river-bed. I shot a wild dog with my rook rifle; it ran into cover, and on following it up I found that it had shed an ammoniac secretion on its tail, so strong that it could be detected from a considerable distance. This had exuded from a sub-caudal gland, and perhaps accounted for the story, prevalent throughout India, that these animals in

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pursuit blind their victims by whisking this liquid into the eyes with the tail. These destructive beasts are said to attack tigers, and have been known to worry panthers and bears. In this same forest, at about this time, a sportsman came upon a pack of wild dogs that had treed a brace of panthers; some were sitting under the tree and others jumping up, as a dog does when it has treed a cat. One of the panthers was shot, and the carcass hung on the tree while the dogs below licked up the blood that dripped from it. I have known a pack pursue a panther across country. All the wild dogs I have shot in the Deccan had black tips to their tails.

I was walking along a forest road at dawn the following morning when in the dim light a bison appeared, standing by the roadside a hundred yards off. I walked straight up to within twenty yards of the animal, which stood facing me, and fired into its chest, dropping it dead with another bullet in the flank as it turned to bolt. I had taken this to be a solitary bull, but at the sound of the shot a herd of eight or ten broke from the jungle and thundered past, tails in air, and I dropped a young bull dead as they plunged into the forest. I visited the carcasses next morning and on the way put up a pair of ratels, or honey-badgers. A great adjutant bird, seldom seen so far south, was feeding on the remains of the bison, together with a flock of vultures. Then I heard a chattering of monkeys in the trees over a deep ravine and hurried to the spot, expecting to find them swearing at a tiger or panther, according to their wont. But the cause of the excitement was an immense bear, which I met coming up the side of the ravine. On receiving a bullet he turned and fled, but I ran round the head of the ravine and cut him off; still he would not fight, and

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another bullet elicited his mournful and unmelodious death-song.

On my return journey I followed a dry watercourse for ten miles, seeing many tracks of bison. Near a pool of water were the remains of a large cow-bison, which evidently had been killed by a tiger. It had been dead some weeks and much of the dry skin was left on the bones. The horns had disappeared, probably having been gnawed off by porcupines. Close by were the wings and head of a vulture, showing that one of these scavengers had unwarily approached the kill while the tiger was on the spot and had suffered for its rashness. Generally, vultures keep perched in the trees while the tiger is at a kill; if they are seen on the ground, one may safely assume that the tiger is not near. The ground had been soft when the tragedy took place, and there were tracks of the stampeded herd, with the tiger's foot-prints, and marks showing where he had pulled down the cow; so that one could reconstruct the whole story which lay thus plainly written in the book of nature.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Bison & Bears

"To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold."

BYRON.

ONE of my pleasantest trips was after a prolonged visit to Europe, when I explored another part of the forest on the Satpura Hills, beyond the fort of Narnala, which stands on a spur overlooking the Berar Valley. A journey of one hundred and twenty miles by road, which involved thirty-six hours' continuous travelling, brought me to the old fort, where I passed the night. It was a bright moonlight night and I slept in the open courtyard of the fort; this was occupied by a snake, which had to be disposed of in order to make room for my bedding on the ground. The contrast of moonlight and deep shadow peopled the place with the shades of the long-forgotten dead, the warriors who once lived in this now-deserted stronghold and levied tribute by force of arms on the inhabitants of the rich and fertile valley below. Next morning I crossed the few miles of open country between the spur on which the fort stood and the main forest-clad range. It was fine to be once more amid the wilds, to scent the forest air, and to listen to the familiar voices of the woods. The rustling of the wind among the leaves, the sweet aroma of the mohwa-tree, whose fleshy blossoms afford sustenance to both man and beast, the sharp bark of the little russet deer, the call of the jungle-fowl, the trumpet-note of the

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peacock—all these struck upon the chords of memory, while they inspired hope of present sport.

On arriving at the camp I walked half-a-mile to some higher ground, whence a good view could be obtained of a basin formed by the hills. An immature stag stood for some moments staring at me, and then dashed into a neighbouring copse; a kakar ran barking down the hill, and when we reached the summit a fine prospect lay at our feet. A broad valley stretched away for miles and was lost in a golden haze. There were deep ravines filled with gloomy forest, and waving grass on swelling hillocks; giant banyan-trees, clumps of bamboo, and sweet-smelling mohwa, whose pungent odour, borne on the morning air, brought back to memory many a bygone scene. On a small hillock a great bison was cropping the grass, and as I watched him he moved slowly on, to seek the shade of the dense jungle, for the sun was now beating fiercely on the open glades. I hurried down after him, but was only in time to hear him plunge into the thickest of the forest. In a rocky ravine farther on were fresh tracks of a tigress in the soft mud on the brink of a pool where she had slaked her thirst during the night, and from here I returned to camp to make arrangements to tie up a buffalo calf at this spot as bait.

I saw the bison again in the afternoon, but he viewed me at the same moment and disappeared beyond the crest of a hill. I ran to the top, but he dashed into a thickly wooded ravine, where another glimpse of him was obtained. Here, also, a pack of wild dogs had killed a sambar; they scattered on my approach, but did not give me a shot. Next morning I was out at sunrise, and soon saw a bison, which rushed over a ridge in front of me. As we followed on the tracks there was a crashing

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noise in the forest ahead, and a whole herd broke from the jungle and galloped off. It was useless to fire, for the bull could not be distinguished, as we obtained only fleeting views of the animals in open spaces. Finally three cows separated from the herd and ran up the hill, about four hundred yards off. They soon slowed down to a walk, and I watched the magnificent animals with interest as they wound round the hillside. The remainder of the herd, a bull and four cows, went off round a great hill and soon disappeared.

I scaled the hill on the chance of cutting them off, and after two hours' climbing reached the top and crossed to the farther side. As I sat looking down the valley the five bison emerged from the jungle and came to a standstill in an open glade over two hundred yards off. It was a long shot for the ·500 Express, but my only chance, for they would soon disappear in interminable forest. The bull, conspicuous by his shape and dark colour, came last, and I shot him behind the shoulder. All disappeared, but only four emerged in a distant glade, so I knew the bull was down, and soon sighted him standing amid a clump of trees only thirty paces from the place where he was hit. I ran down, but he had moved on into long grass. But here tracking was easy, and I came suddenly upon him facing me at a distance of ten yards and looking very fierce. But if he had any aggressive intentions his great heart failed him, and as he turned to bolt he fell with a crash into a clump of bamboos, with another bullet behind the shoulder, and there died. It took six hours to skin the bull and cut off the head, which was a load for four men to carry to camp.

Meanwhile the tigress had killed the buffalo which had been picketed out, and the men who went to view

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the place reported that she had roared at them, which showed that they had been too near, for the kill should always be viewed from a distance. No beaters could be obtained, so an ambush was built for me in a tree near the carcass, and in this I took up my position before sunset. It is pleasant to pass the night *à la belle étoile*. When in camp I generally had my bed placed in the open, at a distance from the tents, to get any breeze that might relieve the heat of the sultry night. On such occasions I frequently listened to the harsh, grating cry of the panther, and have sometimes heard the deep purr of a prowling tiger passing not far off. There is something extraordinarily attractive in such a situation, perhaps due to inherited memory of the free life of the primitive hunting-man which is present in some of us. There is a mystery in the silence of the night, broken only by the voices of the forest. In the dark blue vault above shine "the unnumbered stars of God," and on moonlight nights the bright light creates in the jungle fantastic outlines of trees and shadows standing in ghostly array, stirred at times by a fugitive breeze.

On this occasion, from my ambush in a tall tree, I watched pea-fowl, jungle-fowl and barking deer come down to drink, but no tigress appeared. She was on the prowl, for soon after sunset a kakar barked affrightedly and repeatedly up the nullah. Was the tigress coming at last? I grasped my rifle and peered into the deepening gloom. No sign of catlike form! No sound of stealthy tread! Scarcely could I distinguish the reflection of a solitary star in the placid surface of the pool. I went to sleep, and about midnight was awoke by the noise made by some heavy animal in the jungle behind me; turning my head I saw an enormous bison, appear-

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ing colossal in the moonlight, walking along the hillside only a few yards off. The bison detected me on the instant, or was alarmed by the smell of the dead buffalo; he dashed into the shadows of the forest and stood close by, but invisible, stamping, snorting and pawing up the ground for some time. After he had gone I dropped off to sleep again, and awoke to the crowing of the jungle-cocks.

When my men arrived we took up the tracks of this midnight visitor, and after some hours came up with the animal. Stalking was difficult owing to the crackling of dry leaves underfoot, but I had a shot and wounded the bull. I followed him up, and after a long stern chase came close up to him, but before I could get a shot at a vital spot he plunged into a deep ravine filled with forest, where he was lost for ever. These animals have an undeserved reputation for ferocity. I have walked up to both wounded and unwounded bulls, but they have displayed no aggressive intentions. It seems probable that in the case of both this and other animals a wild rush to escape is too often interpreted as a deliberate charge with hostile intent. At the same time, wounded bulls have been known to attack sportsmen, with fatal results—to the hunter. The tiger is the only enemy of the bison, besides man. A friend of mine, in this same forest, shot a tiger which had had one eye gouged out, and his attendant Korkus said that they had witnessed the fight in which this happened. The bison, which was killed, was a fine bull, whose head was brought to me by one of the witnesses.

On the last day of this expedition, when walking along the side of a hill on the lookout for game, I heard a party of bears at play in the long grass below. Descending, I was met by three bears, which charged towards me

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open-mouthed, with an accompaniment of gruff growls. I killed two with a right and left at a distance of five or six yards, and the third turned and bolted before I could reload. These bears vary in size from five to six feet in length, and are therefore not as big as the European or Himalayan brown bear. But they are quite big enough to be formidable—a circumstance which reminds me of an experience when I was hunting bears in Russia. The overseer of the estate where I was staying was a very jealous sportsman, proud of having killed a dozen or so bears in his thirty years' stewardship. He was very put out when I told him that I had killed about twenty-five bears in India; but after some minutes' thought he consoled himself by remarking: "They must have been very small ones!"

But the bear may be a formidable antagonist, and has been known to inflict frightful injuries even when unwounded. The attacking bear does not hug; it uses teeth and claws, and will bite a man's head nearly in halves, or will tear off his scalp. Generally speaking, the brown bear has a reputation for mildness, while both the sloth bear of the Satpura Hills and the plains of India and the Himalayan black bear have a character for ferocity. My own belief is that, as these black bears are generally met with at close quarters in the jungle they inhabit, they, like all animals, are more ready to attack in a sudden surprise or fear than are those which, like the brown bear of the Himalayas, are usually encountered in the open, and not at a short distance. But in Kashmir I followed up a wounded brown bear, tracking the blood which stained the white radiance of the snow, and came upon him at a few yards' distance. He made no attempt to charge, but perhaps he had little chance of doing so.

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On another occasion I fired at, and missed, a brown bear about thirty yards off when he charged straight uphill at me; but this was perhaps a blind rush, and the charge probably would not have been made good, even if the animal had not been dropped dead in his tracks at a few yards' distance. But the natives everywhere have a wholesome dread of bears, which is not surprising in view of the numbers one meets with who have suffered from their claws. These usually are people who have been gathering sticks or other produce of the jungle and have stumbled upon Bruin at close quarters.

The Melghat forest has its historical associations. In these hills are passes through which invaders from the north have at times descended upon Berar, such as that at Muktagiri, where there is a group of ancient temples, and where, since the legendary days of the Buddha, saffron-clad priests have offered up their orisons to the deities of jungle, hill and rock-hewn shrine. On 8th December 1858, when Tantia Topi attempted to break through from the north, with the intention of raising the standard of the Peshwa in the Deccan and Southern Mahrattas, Brigadier Hill came upon an advance-guard of rebel horsemen in the hills west of Gawilgarh. The rebels fled, pursued for twelve miles by Captain Clogstoun with some cavalry. A few were killed and some captured, who were shot next morning, being mutineers from the north. There was another fight the next day, when both cavalry and infantry of the Hyderabad Contingent field force came up with the enemy's main body and dispersed them, with considerable loss, in spite of the density of the forest.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Footsteps of Wellington

"Here rise the red beams of war."
OSSIAN.

IN a previous chapter reference has been made to the part played by the future Duke of Wellington in Hyderabad affairs during the Mahratta War of 1803, and earlier, when he commanded the forces of the State in the final war against Tipu Sultan. On the outbreak of the Mahratta War, General Wellesley, as he then was, was given command of an army for operations in the Deccan. He made a rapid march with mounted troops, entered Poona, and from there marched on Ahmednagar, one of the strongest fortresses in India, which was captured by assault. With regard to this operation, a Mahratta chief on the British side wrote: "These English are a strange people and their General is a wonderful man; they came here in the morning, looked at the wall, walked over it, killed all the garrison, and returned to breakfast. What can withstand them!" It is interesting to get a glimpse of Wellesley at this time, as described by one of his officers. "He was a little above middle height, well-limbed and muscular, with little encumbrance of flesh beyond that which gives shape and manliness to the outlines of the figure; an erect carriage, a countenance strongly patrician in feature, profile and expression, and an appearance remarkable and distinguished; few could approach him without being aware of something strange and penetrating in his clear light eye."

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From Ahmednagar Wellesley marched to Aurangabad in order to check the Mahrattas, who were pouring like a torrent over the passes in the Ajanta Hills. Here he was met by Colonel Collins, the British Resident, who had been at Sindhia's Court until the outbreak of hostilities. This remarkable character was described as follows by an officer: "On reaching the tent of the Resident we were unexpectedly received with a salute of artillery, for such is the state maintained by this representative of John Company, known in Bengal by the name of King Collins, that he had a brigade of field pieces, worked by native artillerymen, attached to his escort. In front of a noble suite of tents, which might have served for the Great Mogul, we were received by an insignificant, little, old-looking man, dressed in an old-fashioned military coat, white breeches, sky-blue silk stockings, and large glaring buckles to his shoes, having a highly powdered wig, from which depended a pigtail of no small dimensions, surmounted by a small round black silk hat ornamented by a single black ostrich feather, looking altogether not unlike a monkey dressed up for Bartholomew Fair. There was, however, a fire in his small black eye, shooting out from beneath a large, shaggy, penthouse brow, which more than counterbalanced the ridicule that his first appearance naturally excited." But such men, devoting their lives to their country's service, did much to establish and maintain our power and prestige in the East.

I have two rough hammered-iron bullets which I picked up on the battlefield of Assaye on Christmas Day, 1898, when encamped on the bank of that Juah stream which had run red with blood on a September morning ninety-five years before. What thoughts are

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conjured up by those relics! What pale phantoms of the past rose from the mists of time on that narrow strip of land where Wellesley's skilful tactical dispositions turned to naught the advantage given to the enemy by his immense preponderance in guns and infantry and myriad horse. In imagination I could see the English General when he rode up in front of a native battalion which had halted for a moment during the advance, and, taking off his hat, waved it in his hand and cheered them forward in their own language.

The first view of the battlefield, approaching from the south, is obtained from the ridge which, rising to a considerable height above the Kailna river, overlooks the scene below. It was at this point that Wellesley arrived on the morning of 23rd September 1803 and saw before him the Mahratta hosts drawn up in battle array, extending east and west along the peninsula between the Kailna and Juah rivers. The infantry was on the left with a hundred guns, standing in the intervals between formations, ready to vomit forth death upon the assailants, and thirty thousand horse extended to the west as far as the eye could reach.

When I rode on to the ridge on a December morning the Kailna river, which ran below, offered no obstacle except to the passage of guns—a want that could easily be supplied, even in the face of an enemy, by digging ramps in the river-bank. There was little water in this inconsiderable stream; the banks were nowhere more than a few feet high, while the small villages of Warur and Pipalgaon stood on either bank, indicating plainly to anyone acquainted with the Indian countryside that there was a ford between them. But when Wellesley arrived there in September, towards the end of the

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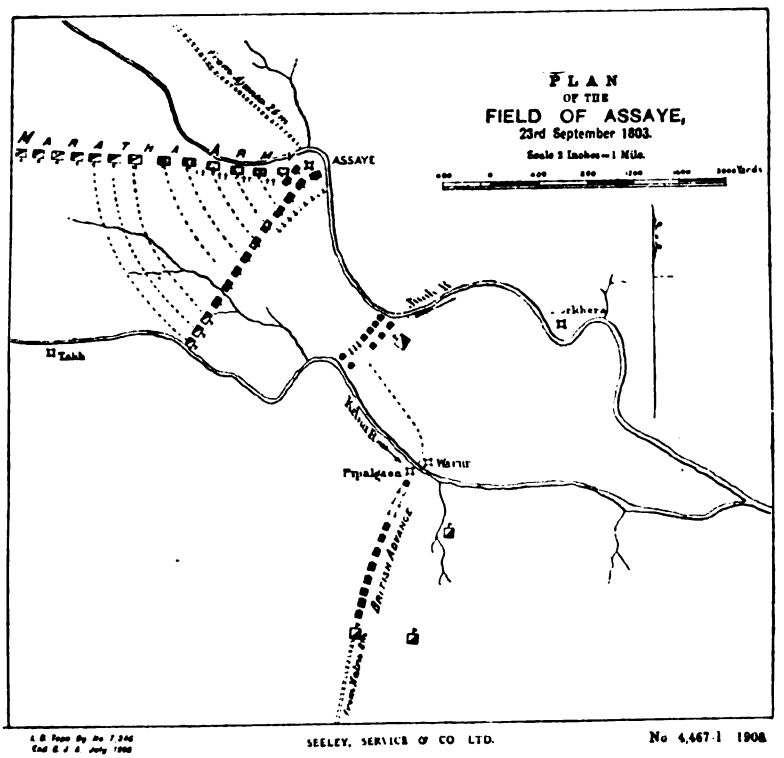
monsoon season, the water may well have been flowing in a turbid flood. The English Commander, whose eye nothing escaped, at once perceived the ford. But what was even more important, for the flood water would soon run off, was the tactical weakness of the enemy's



position. Extending east and west along the peninsula, which, about a mile in width, narrowed to half-a-mile near the point of passage, it afforded no space for the Mahrattas to manœuvre or deploy their immense forces, and enabled Wellesley to place his five thousand men on something like an equality of front with the enemy's forty thousand. An attack in flank would

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oblige them to change front and present a new line extending across the narrow width of the peninsula.

The English General was quick to perceive his advantage. Covering his left flank with cavalry, which kept in check two large bodies of horse that had crossed the stream, he moved down upon the ford, passed it with his guns leading, covered by an advance-guard, and thus forced the enemy to change front, with their left on the village of Assaye and their right on the Kailna river. In this position they occupied a neck of the peninsula about a thousand yards in width.

In crossing the ford the artillery, drawn by bullocks, was overwhelmed by grape and canister from the Mahratta guns. But the infantry pressed on, for the General, being told that the guns were out of action, replied: "Let them go on without them." An officer who was present wrote: "I was particularly struck at this time by the beauty of the line formed by our cavalry and the steady movement of the column of infantry, so unlike the usual order of march. Not a whisper was heard through the ranks, our nerves were wound up to the proper pitch, and everyone seemed to know that there was no alternative but death or victory." Nothing could withstand the onslaught of British infantry, gallantly supported by their native comrades. The Mahratta horse took to flight early in the action, their infantry broke and fled before the advancing line, their gunners, standing manfully to their pieces, were bayoneted where they stood.

Many gallant episodes were described by contemporary writers. Colonel Maxwell was killed at the head of the 19th Light Dragoons; Captain Campbell of the 74th Foot, who had lost an arm in the Poligar War, and

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also had broken the other wrist, rode with his bridle between his teeth so as to keep his sword-arm free; Lieutenant Nathan Wilson, whose arm was shattered by a grape shot, and dangling by his side, charged at the head of his troop of the 19th; Sergeant Strange, in the act of saving his officer, was speared through the lungs, but continued in the action throughout the day. Beside Wellesley rode Mountstuart Elphinstone and Gokhale, a brave Mahratta in the service of Baji Rao, Peshwa, who was killed fourteen years later in the combat of Ashti when fighting against us. Wellesley's orderly dragoon had his head taken off by a cannon-ball; the body was kept in its place by the valise and holsters, and it was some time before the terrified charger could get rid of its ghastly burden. Of Wellesley, Mountstuart Elphinstone wrote: "It is nothing to say of him that he exposed himself on all occasions and behaved with perfect indifference in the hottest fire, for I did not see any European do otherwise, and I do not believe people ever do; but in the most anxious and important moments he gave his orders as clearly and coolly as if he had been inspecting a corps or manœuvring at a review."

The village of Assaye, remote from all sounds of war and far from the busy life of cities, slumbers on the bank of the Juah river. It is an insignificant hamlet, with few inhabitants and a small ruined mud-fort inhabited by a colony of pigeons. Ninety-five years after the battle there was no indication of the event except a few ruined graves and the rough hammered-iron bullets turned up by the husbandman in the field which had shaken with the thunder of guns, the hoof-beats of charging squadrons, and the tramp and cheers of

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infantry. Here in silence and in peace the gallant dead lie in their resting graves. So sleep the brave for evermore! Seventy years before this an officer who visited the scene found a grove of mangoes shading a Muhammadan place of prayer outside the village. Round this fane reposed many of the officers killed in the battle, and high overhead, attached to a pole on one of the trees, fluttered the white triangular flag of a fakir who lived in a hollow tree and had nightly lighted a lamp upon the tombs. The natives of India have a special veneration for the tombs of departed warriors. Thus at the now-abandoned station of Sirur in the Deccan the tomb of General Wallace was always respected by the native troops who occupied the place. The guard at the Picquet Hill used to turn out at midnight and present arms to the imaginary vision of the General, seated on his favourite white charger.

The British loss in this hard-fought battle amounted to four hundred and fifty killed and eleven hundred wounded. The wounded were moved to Ajanta, where, however, the famous Buddhist rock-hewn caves had not yet been discovered. Wellington is generally represented as being hard-hearted and unfeeling, but here at any rate he was thoughtful for his wounded, who were supplied with wine and other luxuries from his own stores.

Fifteen years after the battle of Assaye the skirts of war swept across this part of the country during the flight of Baji Rao, Peshwa, after his defeat at Poona. He fled through the neighbouring district, where the villagers point out the places he passed during his flight, and some say that in the silent watches of the night they hear the beat of the hundred thousand hoofs

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of his myriad horse upon the plain. In 1912 I happened upon a curious echo of those times. I was encamped some miles from the village of Assaye in country abounding in leopards. One evening some Brinjaras brought news that they had marked down one of these animals. We tried to drive the beast out, but it turned on the beaters and seized a boy, who had come to see the sport, by the back of his neck and head, the teeth, fortunately, slipping on the skull and not penetrating the head. I carried him back to the village on my pony, dressed the wounds, and for several days went each day to attend him.

Among the interested spectators in the hut, where several generations lived, was a very old and wrinkled man, who was stone-deaf, but who conveyed his approval of the proceedings by speech and signs. I asked how old he was, and was told that he was the great-grandfather of the family and was one hundred and twenty-five years old. He said that he remembered Baji Rao's Mahratta horse passing through the country in 1817, when he had been a bullock-driver with the English force in the neighbourhood. Some cavalry of the Nizam's contingent were at that time employed in watching the passes over the Ajanta Hills, under the command of Captain "Tiger" Davies.

I had twenty years earlier, in Russia, met a man who well remembered the coming of Napoleon in 1812, and had waited on the Emperor in the house where I was staying, which had been his headquarters for a time, as recorded in history. But that was only eighty years after the event! Ninety-five years had elapsed since Baji Rao had passed this way.

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CHAPTER SIX

Battles & Sieges

"The morning drum-call on my eager ear
Thrills unforgotten yet."

R. L. STEVENSON.

WELLESLEY manœuvred for some weeks in the country between Ajanta and Aurangabad, and, as he said, was "like a man who fights with one hand and defends himself with the other," for with his own force he had to defend the passes over the Ajanta Hills and with Colonel Stevenson's to act offensively and take the fortress of Asirgarh. At length he penned in the enemy beyond the passes that lead over the rugged hills into the fertile plain of Berar. He passed here through a region that abounds in game, where even thirty years ago great herds of antelope wandered almost unmolested over the plain, which swarmed also with hares, partridges, quail and sand-grouse. Here the English Commander and his officers enjoyed varied sport, for one of them records that they passed through a beautiful country, full of game, and amused themselves as usual hunting and shooting on the right flank the whole way. So we used to do ninety years afterwards in peaceful times, having with us gun and spear on the line of march. No doubt Wellesley himself took part in this sport, for we find a memorandum, published in a General Order, that "General Wellesley is very desirous of having some dogs which were found in Asirgarh, and also some fowling-pieces taken there; he

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will be much obliged if any gentleman who is in possession of these dogs or fowling-pieces will send them to him. The full value will be returned." History does not relate whether the quest was successful or not.

On the morning of 29th November 1803 the English General observed, from the top of a tower in Patholi, two miles to the south, the armies of Sindhia and the Raja of Berar drawn up in front of the village of Argaum. This hamlet was pleasantly situated amid betel-gardens and fields, the surrounding country covered with crops of millet growing to a height of seven or eight feet, as it was when I hunted in the vicinity ninety years after. Wellesley at once advanced to the attack, at first at the head of his cavalry and then returning to direct the infantry columns. But when some pickets of Madras Native Infantry debouched from the cover of a village, and came under the sudden fire of fifty pieces of cannon, they were seized with panic. Wellesley wrote with regard to this incident: "I am convinced that if I had not been near to rally them and restore the battle we should have lost the day." An officer who was present relates that "the General, who was close to the spot under a tree giving orders to the brigadiers, perceiving what had happened, immediately stepped out in front, hoping by his presence to restore the confidence of the troops; but seeing that this did not produce the desired effect, he mounted his horse and rode up to the retreating battalions, when, instead of losing his temper and upbraiding them, and endeavouring to force them back to the spot from which they had fled, as most people would have done, he quietly ordered the officers to lead their men under cover of the village, and formed them on

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the very spot he originally intended them to occupy, the remainder of the column following, and prolonging the line to the right.

"While the General was thus employed in restoring order and forming his division, Colonel Stevenson had begun to deploy to the left of the village, and by the time the General could with safety leave the right wing, this movement was effected. He was much pleased with the appearance of Colonel Stevenson's division in line, and no doubt a little pleased with himself also, for in riding back to the right wing he said to me: 'Did you ever see a line of battle restored like this?'"

The Mahrattas showed little fight after their experiences at Assaye. A stand was made by two thousand Arabs, who, with fierce shouts, charged down upon the 74th and 78th Regiments, but were repulsed with terrible slaughter. Even the horrors of war have their humorous side. During the action Lieutenant Langlands of the 74th had his leg transfixed by a spear thrown by an Arab, who rushed at him, sword in hand, to complete the conquest. But Langlands seized the spear and threw it with so true an aim that he transfixed his opponent, the spear passing through his body at a few yards' distance. Colonel Welsh, who was close by, relates: "All eyes were turned on the two combatants, when a sepoy of our grenadiers rushed out of the ranks and, patting the lieutenant on the back, exclaimed: '*Accha sahib! Bahut accha kiya!*' ('Well, sir! Very well done!') So ludicrous a circumstance, even in a moment of such extreme peril, could not pass unnoticed, and our soldiers all enjoyed a hearty laugh before they completed the work of death on the remaining ill-fated Arabs."

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The enemy retreated, with the loss of their guns, ammunition and treasure, pursued by the cavalry. The officer already referred to said: "I witnessed on this occasion a curious mode of attack adopted by the old 19th Light Dragoons in their pursuit of the native horsemen, whose bodies were so defended, either by armour or stuffed coats, that there was no getting a cut at them, while their heads were equally protected by a large turban, with a thick pad depending over the ears and neck. This being the case, it became necessary to 'establish a raw' before any wound could be inflicted with the sword. To effect this, therefore, they first gave point at the turban, and that being knocked off, they had a fair cut at the head."

The deeds of the 19th Light Dragoons were famous in India. A few years after this, led by the gallant Robert Rollo Gillespie, they suppressed the mutiny at Vellore. It is related that they were a fine specimen of what a regiment ought to be, except that their habits were not the most temperate. By almost constant service and the manly game of long bowls, which the old Indian regiments used to practise under the hottest sun, the men had become perfectly bronzed and were as hard as iron, being proof against sun without and arrack within. They used to call themselves "The Terrors of the East," and such was the respect in which they were held by the natives that when they embarked for England all the Black Town of Madras was emptied to see them off.

North-west of Ellichpur, where the army arrived on 5th December, crowning one of the highest peaks of the Satpura range, stands the great fortress of Gawilgarh, the walls of which can on a clear day be plainly

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distinguished from a distance of many miles. To this fortress there were several approaches, and in it, after the battle of Argaum, a body of Rajputs, under Beni Singh, took refuge, where their families were established. Some three miles from Ellichpur the road to the north-west splits into two branches, both leading to Gawilgarh, one a somewhat circuitous way through the villages of Dhamangaon and Mota, the other by the hamlets of Deogaon and Imlibagh. This path enters the hills through the valley of the Chandrabagha river, a considerable stream in the rainy season, but a dry, stony watercourse during the greater part of the year. There is a third and still more circuitous road which, winding up the mountains for sixteen miles due north of Ghatang, turns abruptly to the west and, passing through the dense Melghat forest for another sixteen miles, emerges on the plateau north of Gawilgarh. This route was taken by Stevenson, while Wellesley himself marched by Deogaon and Imlibagh, disposing his force to prevent the enemy from escaping to the south. It is the road by which I used to enter the Melghat forest, as related in an earlier chapter.

On 9th December the General reconnoitred the approach, where Mountstuart Elphinstone gives us a glimpse of him, as he did at Assaye. Elphinstone wrote: "There was a steep rising ground between us and the fort, behind which we were quite concealed. We dismounted and ascended the rising ground, where from behind some stones the whole north side of the fort suddenly appeared. There was something of surprise and grandeur in this. The wall with battlements, the fort with tents, mosques and other buildings, all burst on our view at once. Between us and the fort

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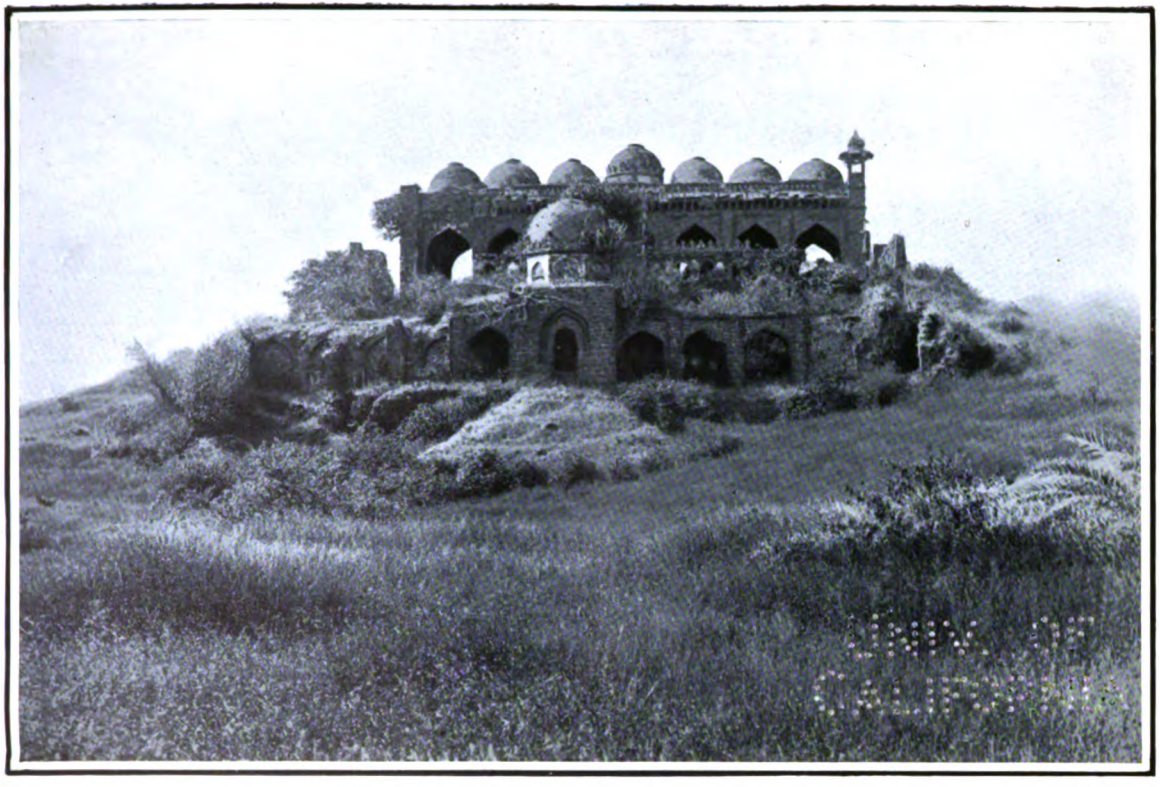

IN FORT GAWILGARH

The Mosque in the ruins of the fort stormed by Wellington and his men in 1803, now crumbling into dust and abandoned to the jungle and its denizens[1]

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on the right some houses were burning, and some of the enemy who had set them on fire were still there. They were very near; we had not time to look carefully at the fort. I did not like to look long for fear of drawing fire on the General. . . . In going off, the General rode to the rising ground to take a look at the fort, and all his escort rode after him. As we went off the fort began firing, but without effect."

During the siege a European officer belonging to one of the native regiments laid a bet that he would, in open daylight, walk from the breaching-battery up to the ditch of the fort, a distance of about four hundred yards, and back again without breaking into a run. He accordingly started about noon, while the batteries were silent, and walked slowly up to the edge of the ditch, which was within pistol-shot of the walls, when, having taken off his hat and made a low bow to the enemy, he deliberately retraced his steps and won his bet uninjured. So long as he continued to advance, although the enemy crowded the ramparts to view him, they did not offer to fire, thinking he came to parley; but the moment he turned his back they opened upon him a shower of musketry and shot, which did not cease until he was safe in the trenches.

The fortress was taken by assault on 15th December, the storming parties being led by the 94th Regiment, afterwards the Connaught Rangers. The garrison fought bravely, and nearly all fell in the defence, their leader, Beni Singh, being found under a heap of dead at the gate. The treasure and jewellery of the women were said to have been thrown into the tanks in the fort, but when these were emptied ninety years afterwards nothing was found. The turreted walls of

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Gawilgarh are still in an excellent state of preservation, while about a dozen guns, which formed its armament, rest on the battlements or lie in the rank undergrowth that springs beneath. The fort is abandoned and uninhabited save for a few families residing in some squalid huts within the northern gate. But, lifting its time-worn pile on the summit of the mountains, it remains a lasting monument to the skill of the English Commander and to the valour of his troops. Wellesley stood triumphant on the summit of the Satpuras, and discerning men might already appreciate the genius which carried him to victory ten years later on a greater arena when, in the glowing words of Napier, "the English General, emerging from the chaos of the Peninsular struggle, stood on the summit of the Pyrenees, a recognised conqueror. From those lofty pinnacles the clangor of his trumpets pealed clear and loud, and the splendour of his genius appeared as a flaming beacon to warring nations."

Many wild animals, including tigers and leopards, frequent such abandoned forts as Gawilgarh, where there used always to be tigers in the vicinity. It is probable that no British soldier was seen there again until nearly ninety years later, when in 1891 the place was tried as a sanatorium for troops stationed at Nagpur. One day an officer was beating for a tiger, without success, when a soldier who had joined the beat, and who evidently had more acquaintance with cities than with jungles, came up to him and said: "I don't know what you are looking for, but there is something like a blooming big cat sitting over there." He had seen the tiger without recognising it as the object of pursuit!

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The supply of the army was mainly carried out with the aid of Brinjaras, with their large herds of pack-bullocks, which carried grain and other necessities. These entailed the employment of troops as escort to the convoys—a dangerous service in view of the numbers and mobility of the Mahratta Horse. Thus at the end of October a convoy of fourteen thousand bullocks protected by three companies of Madras infantry and two 3-pounders and some auxiliary troops was attacked by five thousand horse after crossing the Godavery. But they were driven off by the fire of the guns and musketry, this successful defence affording, as the General wrote, "another instance of what can be done by disciplined infantry, determined to do their duty, against very superior numbers of cavalry."

One of these convoy actions was remarkable for the prowess of a British officer at Kurjet Koregaon, in the neighbourhood of Ahmednagar. The convoy, consisting of a hundred sepoys, under Captain O'Donnell, was attacked by a thousand Arab mercenaries. The subaltern, Lieutenant Bryant, a very powerful man, cut down an Arab and seized the enemy's standard. At this moment the Mahratta Horse appeared, and O'Donnell withdrew into the village. Here the situation was saved by the extraordinary courage of Bryant. Knowing no word of the sepoys' language he harangued them in broken English, and frequently sallied out with a few volunteers in search of supplies, killing some of the enemy on each occasion. Among other feats, having broken his sword on an Arab skull, he seized a musket and bayonet, which he always used afterwards, and became so dexterous with this weapon that he often put the bayonet through one man and knocked down a

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second with the butt-end. One day, seeing a leader mounted on a beautiful mare, he singled him out for his prey, and, running him through, bore off the mare in triumph. With native troops in particular it is impossible to overestimate the value of such a paladin, and this small detachment was enabled, by the force of this heroic example, to beat off more than ten times its number.

After the capture of Gawilgarh the English General concluded a treaty on 17th December at Deogaon, at the foot of the hills, with regard to the effects of which he wrote to his brother the Governor-General: "The British Government has been left by the late war in a most glorious situation. The sovereignty they possess is greater, and their power is set upon more permanent foundations than any before known in India. All it wants is the popularity which, from the nature of the institutions and the justice of the proceedings of the Government, it is likely to obtain after a short period of tranquillity shall have given the people time and opportunity to feel the happiness and security which they enjoy."

Indeed the English General's actions, his views and his dispatches, prove him to have been as great a statesman as he was a soldier, even in his early days in India, and all who have dealings with the East may well study his principles when he said: "I would sacrifice Gwalior or every frontier of India ten times over in order to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith and the advantage of and honour gained by the late war and peace; we must not fritter them away in argument drawn from overstrained principles of the laws of nations which are not understood in this country.

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What brought me through many difficulties in the late war and the negotiations of peace? The British good faith, and nothing else."

I remember thinking of these things and reflecting on the peace established in the Deccan when encamped at that very village of Deogaon nearly forty years ago. The tide of war had long rolled to the north, never to return; and the husbandman tilled his fields in peace, safe from the depredations of Mahratta and Pindari, while on the summit of the peak above that pierced the sky the fort of Gawilgarh no longer harboured bands of freebooters to prey upon the plain below. I sat all one night in an ambush near the village to try to get a shot at a leopard, the only kind of marauder now infesting that peaceful spot. But the leopard did not come. I afterwards shot one not far off, where it had killed a calf. A goat was tied up near the scene of the tragedy, and towards sunset the leopard suddenly rushed from the jungle and seized the wretched animal by the throat. I fired on the instant, but too late to save the goat's life, which was already ebbing from the holes in the throat, while its murderer gasped out its last breath beside it.

The Arabs who had attacked O'Donnell's detachment met with retribution during the General's return march from Ellichpur to Poona, when he made a forced march and dispersed them with heavy loss at Mankesar. This, he told Lord Stanhope, was "the most surprising march ever made—seventy-two miles from five one morning to twelve the next, and all fair marching; nor could there be any mistake as to distance, for in India we always marched with measuring wheels." This march was accomplished between the morning of 4th February

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1804 and noon next day, and included a halt from noon until eight o'clock on the evening of the 4th; so the troops actually marched seventy-two miles in twenty-nine hours. The force consisted of some cavalry and infantry, including the 74th Foot, who attacked and completely dispersed the enemy at the end of the march, capturing all his guns and baggage.

This campaign brought Wellesley's military activities in India to an end. But it was not until March 1805 that he embarked for Europe, leaving his great name and example as an imperishable monument, exciting others to like deeds of glory and serving at once to adorn, defend and perpetuate the existence of our Empire among the ruling nations of the earth.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Annals of an Indian Cantonment

"Footprints on the sands of time."

LONGFELLOW.

THE cantonment of Hingoli, situated in the northern part of the Nizam's dominions, was occupied by the Hyderabad Contingent for nearly a century, and abandoned on the break-up of the force in 1903. A long winding road, stretching for eighty miles like a white ribbon over hill and plain, connected the cantonment with the distant line of rail. We were far from the outer world. In the cold season and during the monsoon the country between Hingoli and the station at Akola was a sea of green crops, with tracts of hill and wasteland and at times patches of tree and bush-jungle. But in the hot weather all was arid and burnt up. The trees lost their leaves and stood ghostlike, with outstretched arms, as though straining to catch the fugitive breeze, but the mangoes and other evergreens afforded grateful shade for man and beast. The fields were then black or brick-red, and seared with innumerable fissures by the baking rays of the summer sun. In the watercourse but little moisture remained; only here and there a pool, scarcely large enough for a buffalo to wallow in, or extensive enough to reflect the tall palms that stood upon the bank, where the beasts of the field assembled to quench their thirst at morn and at the setting of the sun.

But in the river beyond the cantonment there were broader reaches of clear water; here and there might

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even be seen the silver thread of a running stream, and green grass grew upon the banks. It was a bleak prospect in summer. But on the plains and among the low undulating hills there were herds of antelope and gazelle to gladden the eye of the sportsman. From the top of the rising ground, known as Mount Pisgah, overlooking the cantonment, could be seen the long rows of mud-huts occupied by the troops, and the white, thatched bungalows of the officers standing amid their groups of trees on the hither side of the native town and bazaar. A broad lake, full to overflowing after heavy rain, but dry in summer, covered many acres on the outskirts of the cantonment, and a smaller sheet of water lay between the lines and the bazaar. On these we had fine duck-shooting in the cold weather, when the migratory birds arrived, and a few couple of snipe were often to be picked up among the reeds that grew upon the marshy margin of the lake. There, too, I have seen wild geese, flamingos and demoiselle cranes.

There is a store of romance locked up in the records of old Indian cantonments, much of it gone for ever, for either the documents are lost or destroyed, or the records are contained only in the memories of those to whom they have been passed on by oral tradition, or they have been buried for ever with men long dead and forgotten. But there may be a few who, like myself, have jotted down traditions and recorded episodes from the memory of those who have participated in events, or who have themselves taken part in adventures and incidents relating to an order of things that has passed away and will be no more seen.

Many of these cantonments were established in historic circumstances, for the effective occupation of

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BRUIN AT HOME

This hairy animal is impatient of heat, having to carry so heavy a coat in a tropical climate. Although black is a conspicuous colour, he finds some protection when living among boulders which resemble him in shape and colour.

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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territory and the protection of the inhabitants against raiding bands of Pindaris and other marauders. The very appearance of the country is a commentary on the views of those who hold that British rule, at any rate before the introduction of "self-determination," has been productive of only evil in India, and who sigh for the "good old days" before the establishment of the Pax Britannica. Every village has its mud-fort, now disused and falling into dust, behind whose walls alone the inhabitants used to find safety. In the larger towns and villages these strongholds are fortified and protected by thick masonry and iron-clamped gates of impregnable structure. Many have a stirring history and some are marked with the splash of shot.

Even as recently as 1894 a robber band was broken up and its leader killed in the neighbourhood by a party of cavalry. Before this happened one of the Sikh bandits murdered a policeman, and was caught and executed. In the Nizam's dominions the death penalty was carried out by decapitation. The culprit knelt with his arms tied behind his back, a rope attached to them being held by a man standing behind him; another rope held by a man in front was fastened round his head. The executioner, flourishing a sharp sword, approached the victim, whose head was then pulled forward by the rope, when the neck was cut through with a dexterous stroke.

Some five years afterwards a band of robbers, mostly Brinjaras, were rounded up and destroyed near Bir, in the Mominabad district. Lieutenant Fagan, who was subsequently drowned in an attempt to save the life of a man, told me of this encounter, in which he was engaged with a party of cavalry. The dacoits had taken up a position, which they defended until nearly all had been

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killed. The wounded were finished off by their own comrades—a custom not uncommon in the East, and habitually carried out by the Moplahs of Malabar.

It has been related in a previous chapter how the Hyderabad Contingent was re-formed for the pacification of the Nizam's dominions and for protecting them from the incursions of the Pindaris—those organised free-booters who had their headquarters on the Narbada—and for dealing with other turbulent elements. Hingoli was occupied as a convenient military centre after the siege and capture of the fort of Nowah in January 1819. I used to pass not far from the fort each year on my way to my camp on the bank of the Pein Gunga. It was a mud-fort, then crumbling into dust, situated some fifteen miles to the south of the town of Umerkhed, itself the scene of affrays with Pindaris and the haunt of thugs in days gone by. Nowah fort was taken by assault by the Nizam's contingent under British officers, and its defenders put to the sword to the number of five hundred after a prolonged siege, the attackers having over two hundred casualties. The inscription "Nowah" is still borne on the colours of the corps which took part in this operation, and which are now units of the regular Indian army.

Twenty miles south of Hingoli, on the Nander road, was the Singhi Pass, in the very neck of which was a well into which robbers were supposed to have thrown the corpses of their victims; looking down into the pellucid depths I saw white specks glimmering through the water, which might well have been human bones. I used to enjoy good sport in this neighbourhood with the Ahnds, a tribe of trackers led by one Mahadu, and organised by a sporting grain-dealer, Bujam Rao; they

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lived in the hamlet of Jaum, a few miles from Singhi. I often encamped at Jaum, where there were always a few panthers and bears.

Here I was out with Mahadu and his trackers one morning in April on the stony hills. I pointed to an apparently unblemished slab of rock, and Mahadu looked and grunted; whereupon his immediate followers wagged their heads in wise assent, and we all went on eagerly. A close inspection had revealed to me a tiny scratch on the surface of the rock, and farther on two or three loose stones evidently had been displaced; indeed scurrying insects, whose house had been disturbed, were still moving close to the stones. These signs were clear enough to tell us that Bruin had passed that way. We had found his tracks at early dawn in the valley below, where he had drunk water on his return hillwards from the sugar-cane field, which he had ravaged during the night, and where his plantigrade and almost human foot-print was clearly impressed on the soft earth on the margin of the pool. He had indulged in other activities, and had excavated an ant-hill, in which the marks of his long sharp claws were clearly seen.

We followed now without difficulty, for we had left the rocky outcrop behind and all ahead was easy going. The ground certainly was hard and took no impress of a naked foot. But there was scanty grass growing, and in places the dry or tender blades had been pressed down by the passage of a heavy body carried on flat feet; the breaks in the stems were fresh, and to the experienced eye the writing was plain in the book of nature. Indeed, further tracking was scarcely necessary, for ahead of us lay a deep depression filled with bush-jungle. Beyond was another open stretch of hill, and there could be no

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doubt that any sensible bear, arriving here as the sun topped the hills in the east, and impatient of light and heat, like all of his kind, would have sought the cool shades of this sequestered dell, and have found there a comfortable spot for the day's siesta.

A little stream trickled from the rocks at the head of the ravine and dropped into the watercourse below, where there had been a rushing torrent during the rainy season, for the rocks were white with lime deposit. To make all sure we ringed the head and flanks of the ravine. There was no sign of egress, so Bruin must be at home. Then I took post at a point where the lie of the ground indicated that the bear would most likely emerge, while a line of beaters from below closed in upon the bush-jungle. Still no sign, and the beaters, advancing with terrific uproar, were half way up the ravine. I began to wonder whether the quarry had not gone to earth in a cave. But he was only sleepy. At length a hairy form appeared in an open space among the bushes and clambered up towards my post. Seeing me in the path, the bear charged with a gruff roar, and was within two or three yards when I killed him with a shot in the head.

That night a panther prowled round my tent, where I found the tracks in the morning; he had also entered the village, where he set all the dogs barking. Mahadu and his myrmidons were on the tracks before daybreak, but even they could not follow the velvet-footed beast over hard ground; so men were posted in trees before daylight in favourable positions, from whence the midnight murderer, who had done to death many a calf and goat, was observed slinking at sunrise towards a deep ravine, into which he retired for the day. Swift-footed

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messengers came to my camp with the news, and the panther was driven out and shot as he slunk up the shady side of the ravine.

The science of tracks is one of the most fascinating pursuits of the hunter; but it is better to speak of it as a "romance" than a "science," for, as Robert Louis Stevenson says, "science writes of the world as if with the cold finger of a starfish." The hoof of Pan is seen in every track; nor, indeed, are tracks always as ephemeral as they appear to be, even to the hunter himself. For are there not age-old tracks, footprints on the sands of time, impressed by extinct monsters on what is now solid rock at a period so remote that it is lost in the infinite azure of the past? And there are marks pitted on sandstone by drops of rain that fell on a world as yet unpeopled by the race of man, and marks of the ripples of waves that broke upon the shores of primeval seas while yet the earth was young. Surely there is romance as well as science in tracks, which are as writings in the book of nature, whether imprinted in the dust of bygone ages, on the features of the forest, or on the surface of the snow that, "lighting a little hour or two, is gone."

Tracks are to be found not only on the face of the earth but in the sky above, where, indeed, they are at times quite easy to follow, while to wild animals they are borne in scent on the wind. I was sitting outside my tent at Jaum when a crowd of specks appeared, wheeling and circling in the sky above a small hill about a mile off. Some were descending, while more were continually joining the throng above. There was no mistaking the presence of a dead animal, thus revealed to the trackers of the empyrean, probably a kill, where vultures were descending to the feast.

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I rode out to the spot and found a freshly killed buffalo calf, with the fatal fang-holes in the throat which showed it to be the victim of a panther, whose footmarks were impressed in the dust. But the tracks were lost on hard ground, and the great extent of jungle precluded the possibility of locating the animal. My men hollowed out a small place in the side of the hill and built in front of it a screen of bushes, with a hole to shoot through. We dragged the carcass in front, and before sunset I took up my position in this ambush, some ten feet from the dead buffalo. The moon did not rise until ten o'clock, so I went to sleep with my gun on my knees, one barrel loaded with buckshot, the other with spherical ball. I slept until after the moon had risen and then suddenly awoke with that indefinable feeling, so often experienced, of the proximity of a beast of prey, and every sense was immediately alert. Looking through the hole in my screen of bushes I saw the carcass and its surroundings flooded with moonlight; the body moved, and then the round head of a panther, with glowing eyes, appeared over the carcass, so near that I could see the jaws masticating the flesh and could smell the foul breath. The beast peered in my direction, resting its forepaws on the body of its victim. Then it bent down to renew the bloody feast. When the head was raised again I fired a charge of buckshot into it, and when the smoke cleared the panther's tail appeared convulsively beating the ground; its body was hidden by that of the dead buffalo. I dragged the carcass behind my screen and waited until dawn, but nothing else approached the kill.

Vultures are among the most interesting signs to be observed. More than once I have brought to bag tigers and other beasts of prey by watching these specks

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assembling in the sky. They tell one other things. If they are seen descending to the ground it is evident that the beast whose prey they are devouring is not at hand; otherwise they sit like foul fruit upon the surrounding trees, waiting until the monster has finished with his prey and retired to a distance. Should a vulture venture near when the tiger is feeding or is at hand, it is likely to pay for its temerity, as in the case of the one whose remains I found by those of a dead bison in the Melghat forest. Tigers know how to protect their prey from vultures, which hunt by sight and not by scent, as was at one time supposed. Cover up a carcass or hide it in a thick bush and the birds will not find it. So, when a tiger has eaten his fill he will sometimes conceal the remains with dry leaves or put it under cover. I have known one to drag it into a pool of water. How quickly vultures will pick a carcass clean! A tiger killed a buffalo not far from my camp, and in the early morning the remains were covered with branches. An hour before sunset they were removed, and I sat in ambush over the kill to await the return of the tiger. In a very short time the vultures began to descend. They fought and struggled in foul masses on the bloody remains, and in a quarter of an hour not a vestige was left except the bones, reeking and incarnadined in the light of the setting sun.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Frays & Forays

"Forth from the casement, on the plain
Where honour has the world to gain,
Pour forth and bravely do your part,
O knights of the unshielded heart!"

R. L. STEVENSON.

THE establishment of Hingoli as a military station was fully justified by subsequent events. For many years the country was infested by robber bands; there were numerous frays and forays in the neighbourhood, and always the cavalry had to be ready to take the field at the shortest notice. The call to boot-and-saddle would be followed in an hour by the departure of the squadrons as they rode off through the dust with pennons fluttering in the breeze and lance-heads flashing in the light of the sun. Through the night they rode, and dawn would find them investing a fort or rounding up a party of free-booters fifty or sixty miles away. It took fifty years to establish complete tranquillity in the country.

In the cemetery at Hingoli is the tomb of Captain Herbert Clogstoun, a gallant officer of the 2nd Cavalry, who gained the Victoria Cross in a fight with rebels at Chichamba in January 1859, when a force of the Hyderabad Contingent under Brigadier Hill was clearing up the embers of rebellion after the great Mutiny. On 15th January 1859 the force was approaching the village of Wakhad, thirty-five miles west of Hingoli,

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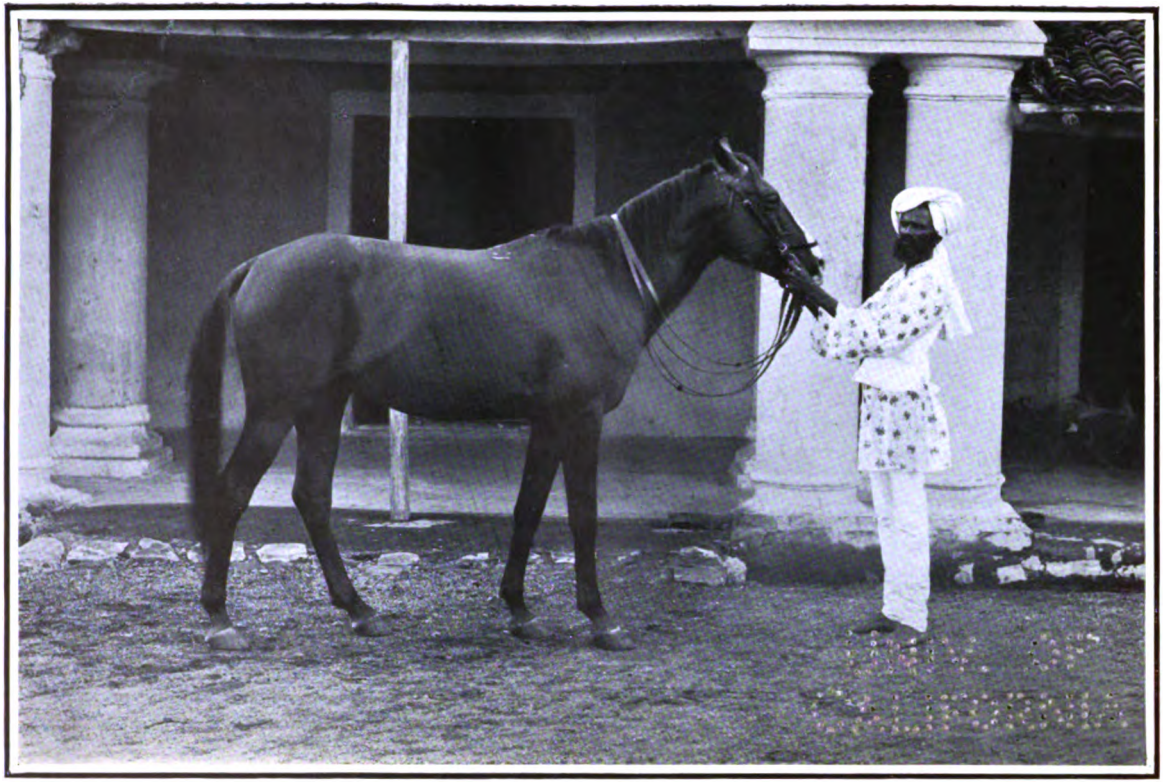

MY ARAB HORSE

A faithful and constant companion for twenty years, who, with his attendant, accompanied the author on many hunting expeditions and covered thousands of miles in jungle, hill, and plain.

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where the Brigadier intended to camp after a thirty-six-mile march, when he received a note from Captain Ivie Campbell, a civil officer at Rissod close by, informing him that a large body of Arabs and Rohillas were plundering that place. Moving rapidly on to Rissod with his cavalry, he found that the insurgents had left with their plunder and had taken the road to Jintur. Captain Clogstoun, who arrived first with his squadron, had already taken up the pursuit, and after a hard gallop of six or seven miles came up with the enemy, who were then passing the village of Chichamba. Only a few of his men had been able to keep up, so great was the pace; but seeing the necessity of delaying the rebels' retreat, as they were approaching ground favourable to their escape, he gallantly attacked them at once with eight men, and drove them into the village and enclosures, losing four killed and three wounded out of his small party, and being himself wounded. He then moved into the plain and formed his detachment as it galloped up. The 3rd Cavalry, under Captain Nightingale, then joined him, and the cavalry was posted round the village to prevent the enemy's escape.

The village consisted of the usual scattered houses, with a fort in the middle, in which the rebels had taken refuge. Brigadier Hill, on his arrival with the guns and infantry, himself took command of the attacking force, other officers with him being Captain McKinnon and Captain Hoseason, Brigade-Major. The party advanced with skirmishers, supported by the guns on the flanks, and a few men fell on entering the village. As they neared the fort the firing became heavier, and Captain McKinnon fell mortally wounded; Captain Hoseason was dangerously wounded shortly afterwards,

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and the Brigadier's orderly was shot dead by his side. Brigadier Hill now tried to urge his men to follow him and gain possession of the fort by a rush, but finding that many crowded round their wounded commander to carry him out of action, and that he was left unsupported, he had no alternative but to withdraw, which he did under heavy fire.

The Brigadier directed the line of cavalry posts to be withdrawn just before sunset, as if with the intention of retreating, but as soon as it became dark they resumed their positions. The moon rose and shone upon the plain, lighting up the scene, outlining the scattered trees and bushes and the more distant hills. No sound broke the silent watches of the night, and friend and enemy alike appeared to have retired to rest. But the sentries were alert. Between nine and ten o'clock a dull murmur arose within the walls of Chichamba, and gathered volume as the insurgents broke from the cover of the village and began their retreat across the plain, moving towards the hills. They marched in a dense phalanx, some four hundred strong — Arabs, Rohillas and Deccanis, sullen and fierce, and bristling with arms. The cavalry, eager for the fray, closed in on every side, followed them with difficulty across the plain, which was intersected by numerous ravines, and pressed on in pursuit up the hill, where a flat plateau offered more favourable ground for their action. From the dense mass of the enemy the flash of firearms pierced the shadows of the night, the rebels firing with steadiness, fighting with the greatest courage, neither asking nor receiving quarter, and resisting to the last with sword and dagger. But the troopers showed equal gallantry, closing in on every side and carrying on the

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fight across the hills until the shattered remnants of the enemy were driven headlong into a deep ravine, impassable for the pursuers, where they made their escape into dense jungle. The fight had been short and fierce, and the insurgents suffered severely, for the ground between the pickets and the ravine, into which they finally plunged, was strewn with their dead and wounded.

Between sixty and seventy miles south-east of Hingoli was a jungle which had at one time been famous for tigers, and where there were still some to be found, while panthers and bears were numerous. A man-eating tiger had been reported in this district, and one morning in February, starting at six o'clock, I rode with a friend sixty-three miles to our camp, near the village of Dudard, which we reached soon after noon. Our men were already on the spot, and had marked down a bear two miles off, so we at once went to the place, a deep rocky ravine filled with dense bush-jungle. We were getting ready to beat him out, when the bear appeared on the brow of the hill above, and I ran after him for half-a-mile and then saw him in the valley below; but although I hunted him until dusk, and had one shot through the bushes, I failed to get this bear, and returned to camp in a somewhat exhausted condition. Next morning we drove out two bears, one of which I missed badly, while my companion followed up and lost the other; but during the chase he came upon a she-bear, with two cubs riding her pick-a-back, and shot her and caught the cubs. Two more bears were seen on these rocky hills that day.

It was now time to come to terms with the man-eater, which killed a small buffalo in a ravine that night. We beat him out next morning, when the beaters got all

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round him, and he set up such a fierce roaring that I feared someone would be killed. However I managed to clear the men away from one side, whereupon, growling and grunting, an immense tiger came tearing up the hillside towards me. I killed him with several shots—a fine tiger, with the darkest and best coat of any I have shot, not at all like the proverbial man-eater, which is supposed to have a mangy skin. This tiger was in the prime of life. The villagers declared he had killed and eaten a number of people, and certainly man-eating ceased with his death. That evening we shot a bear in the same ravine. I had to crawl into dense bush after the wounded bear, and found him lying down sucking his paw a few feet off. He was breathing heavily and raised his head, looking at me with beady eyes and curling his lips like a snarling dog, and was quickly dispatched. Next day an old she-bear, with two cubs nearly as big as herself, was put up, and I killed the old one with a good shot at two hundred yards' distance, but let the cubs go. Indeed it was a pity to shoot many of these harmless animals; they did some little damage to the crops and the fruit, and occasionally mauled a villager, but on the whole they are inoffensive.

The animals in these jungles had the reputation of being unusually fierce. My companion was out again a month or two later, when two of his beaters were mauled by a tigress. Then one day a bear charged him at sight, and a native officer who accompanied him was pulled out of a tree by an unwounded panther and badly mauled. I visited the place some years later, and heard of the mortal injuries inflicted by a tiger there on an officer of the Horse Artillery, while the shikari who had accompanied me had been fatally mauled

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by a panther two years before. In March 1904, seven years after my first expedition, I went to these jungles, intending to visit the fort of Nowah in connection with a history of the Hyderabad Contingent, which I was engaged in writing for the Government of India.

I encamped not far from Kubeir, and on the second day a buffalo was killed by a panther. The beast had dealt with her prey after the manner of a tiger, for the tail was bitten off and she had begun to eat at the haunch, and not at the chest or belly, which is usual with the panther. I arranged the beat, and the friend who accompanied me was posted overlooking the watercourse, up which the animal came walking out of the bush-jungle. He shot her through the body, and we searched the ground for blood-tracks in the direction she had taken. At first nothing could be seen, but I soon picked up a leaf on which was a spot of frothy blood. This indicated a shot through the lungs, and I would have been wise to wait half-an-hour at least before following the beast, but long immunity had made me careless. With a Sikh trooper, Gopal Singh, I was looking farther on along the tracks, while my companion and another Sikh were some distance off, when suddenly there was a hoarse roar and the panther, growling fiercely, rushed from the watercourse, not ten yards off. At first she made for the Sikh, who was a few paces to my left, but as I raised my rifle to shoot her eyes caught the movement, and she turned so rapidly that I could scarcely let off two shots when the beast was upon me: one was certainly a miss; the other grazed her chest. She seized my left fore-arm, raised to protect my throat; there was an odour of

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foul breath in my face, and her weight hurled me violently to the ground on to the back of my head.

To be seized by a wild beast is unpleasant, notwithstanding what Livingstone said of his feelings when in the jaws of a lion; the well-known Bombay sportsman, Mr J. D. Inverarity, said he "felt as usual" in similar circumstances. Perhaps his head did not come into violent contact with the ground as mine did; this precluded my feeling as usual. My rifle was flung in one direction, my hat in another. Gopal Singh was carrying my shot-gun, and he rushed up and beat the beast on the head with the butt-end, and she left me and walked slowly off. She stopped a moment and looked round, and I thought she was coming back, but she went on. All this happened in an instant of time, during which my friend also fired a shot, which no doubt helped to put the panther to flight. I found that my left arm hung useless at my side; the whole of that side was drenched with blood, which was dripping down and forming pools in the dust. In the fore-arm was a great hollow, spouting blood. A large piece of flesh had been torn out, exposing all the muscles. We stripped the left leg and found five claw-wounds in the calf and three deep holes in the thigh, penetrating almost to the bone, inflicted by the canine teeth. One tooth was broken and had not made as deep a wound as the others, and the fourth canine was worn down and had made only a superficial wound.

The panther, game to the last, died close to the scene of the encounter. It proved to be a very large and old female, with four unborn cubs. Wounds inflicted by carnivorous animals are very poisonous, and are liable to cause blood-poisoning from the putrid animal matter

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which accumulates in the form of a black deposit round the bases of the teeth and claws. Where there is a possibility of such accidents there should always be a supply of carbolic acid, and I had previously always had this with me, but on this occasion it had unfortunately been overlooked. The wounds were washed with a solution of boracic acid, and I started on a journey of thirty miles to the railway, in a litter carried by relays of villagers. On the way we passed at midnight a dispensary, where some carbolic acid was obtained and the wounds washed out, but it was altogether some three months before they completely healed.

There were two mistakes made in regard to this accident. The first was in following up the wounded animal too soon—but in this respect I have always been too impatient; secondly, we had no buckshot cartridges, which are the most effective for stopping the charge of a panther. These should be loaded with black powder, as I believe smokeless powder is not effective with buckshot. The death of an officer who was wounded by a panther near Madras in 1918 was ascribed to his using cartridges loaded with smokeless powder; the shot did not penetrate, and the animal therefore made good its charge. It is not easy to stop with a single bullet an animal charging from a distance of a few paces. It is interesting to note that a charging animal does not spring, as so often represented; it charges *ventre-à-terre*, uttering short growls, and seizes one in the rush; usually it makes off into cover after inflicting a few bites, and does not remain to worry the victim.

Hingoli was on the whole a very pleasant and healthy station; but there were two cholera epidemics in my time there, and the disease took toll of our officers in

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this remote and isolated spot. A very gallant officer, who had been recommended for the Victoria Cross when serving in Burma, was stricken with cholera one morning, and died after a brave struggle for life. I sat beside his bed during his last night on earth. The paroxysms of the disease had passed, and he lingered in semi-consciousness. The Last Post sounded and roused for a moment his attention to the bugle-call that he knew so well and would never hear again. Day dawned after the long and fearful hours of the night. He scarcely breathed, and his spirit seemed to hover, with the fluttering of his pulse, on the margin of the river of death. Réveillé rang out across the plain. It must have struck upon the dulled senses of a listening ear. He sat up on the first note and murmured: "It is morning!" And as the last echo died upon the morning air he sank back and his spirit fled away. For him it was morning indeed! Réveillé called him to his last parade and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

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CHAPTER NINE

The Tiger: His Character, Habitat & Coloration

"Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?"

WILLIAM BLAKE.

I WAS once asked to write some notes on the tiger for *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, but my reply was that surely the tiger had been described down to the last stripe. Nevertheless there may still be something to say regarding the noblest and most beautiful of the great carnivora, to which the lion itself must yield pride of place in respect to size, strength, beauty of fur and colour, and matchless courage.

The tiger is proverbially referred to as the embodiment of cruelty and bloodthirstiness, although man has little excuse for stigmatising any animal in such terms, considering his own nature and history. At any rate the tiger does not assemble in armies and wage war on his own kind! There is a popular idea that he will attack any human being who happens to meet with him; but the truth is that the tiger is more afraid of man than is man of the tiger, and even the confirmed man-eater seldom seizes its victim openly, but approaches him by stealth and pounces on him unawares. Man-eaters are scarce, and tigers are responsible for the death of only some one thousand six hundred people each year in British India. The total annual mortality from wild

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beasts in India is about two thousand, in addition to twenty thousand killed by snakes. Large numbers of cattle also are killed.

These are very high figures, but when they are analysed it will be found that they amount to only one in seven thousand of the population. On the score of cruelty and bloodthirstiness, leaving wars out of account, civilised man has not much to boast of. In the United States of America, for example, there are about ten thousand to twelve thousand murders each year; this, in proportion to the population, shows that human beings in the States are more wilfully destructive of human life than all the wild beasts and snakes together in India! In Great Britain forty thousand animals are slaughtered daily for human food, and it should be remembered that while the tiger is a purely carnivorous animal, and kills for food alone, man can live without eating flesh; so even in this respect the tiger is less bloodthirsty than man, who should look to his own reputation rather than stigmatise the wild animal.

The tiger is well able to dispute with the lion the title of King of Beasts. Indeed he seems to have borne a part in ousting the lion from India, for the latter at one time inhabited at any rate a great part of the peninsula. Perhaps the tiger drove the lesser animal from these jungles, where he now reigns supreme, and forced him to retreat to his last stronghold in the Gir forest; just as invaders of superior race have driven the aboriginal tribes of India to remoter fastnesses.

Babar, the founder of the Mughal Empire, hunted lions on the banks of the Indus four hundred years ago; they formerly were found in Hariana, and within the last sixty years were met with in Central India and Guzerat.

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Perhaps the invading tiger helped to oust them from other parts of the country, or possibly their more open habitat led to their earlier destruction.

In India the tiger is the King of Beasts. No doubt the reputation of the lion is largely due to the noble and majestic appearance imparted by his mane. Added to this are Biblical associations, the glamour of a thousand years of history, and such apocryphal tales as that of Androcles. The lion seems more generally addicted to man-eating, at any rate in Uganda, and perhaps similar propensities led to its virtual extinction in India. The lion also, according to that fine sportsman, F. C. Selous, is in the habit of preying on carrion, to which the tiger comparatively seldom resorts. Mr Selous says that the lion, when roaming abroad by daylight, does not carry his head as high as he should to be entitled to the epithet "majestic"; while Livingstone and other writers describe him as mean and cowardly. A well-informed writer in *The Badminton Magazine* for February 1910 says: "A lion is one of the most cowardly of animals, as well as one of the most astute. Even when wounded it is possible to come close up to him in heavy jungle without his thinking of charging. The only time he apparently summons up courage to charge is when he is fairly cornered and knows he has been seen." Such words could not be written of the tiger, which will almost invariably charge with the utmost ferocity when wounded and pursued. It frequently has been pointed out, in comparing lion and tiger hunting, that the lion is shot on foot and the tiger generally from an elephant or tree. There is truth in this, but the difference is due to the nature of the country. Lions are met with usually in open country, where no other method could be

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adopted. Tigers are found in forest, where the hunter on foot would seldom get a shot.

Even as regards general appearance the tiger is superior to the lion; its colour is infinitely more beautiful than the drab coat of the lion. A heavily maned lion is rare, and the tiger with a fine ruff round his head may well bear comparison. The roar of the lion, sometimes represented as resembling the thunder of the elements, is not imposing. Although the lion may not roar as "gently as a sucking dove," Livingstone says that a European cannot distinguish between the note of a lion and that of an ostrich. The two animals are probably about the same length, but so high an authority as Sir Samuel Baker considered the tiger the heavier of the two, and the skull measurements also are larger. Finally, where encounters in captivity have taken place between the two species, the tiger has always been victorious.

It is generally considered that the tiger is a recent immigrant into India from the north, the most conclusive reason being that it is not found in Ceylon, which would be the case if it had reached Southern India before the separation of that island from the mainland. By "recent" is presumably meant geologically recent, a matter of a few hundred thousand years. "Recent" is, however, given in another sense by a writer who points out that there is no word for tiger in Sanscrit. This language dates back some three thousand years, and a thousand years less as a fixed language. It is uncertain whether it is Asiatic or European in origin, but if this reason is accepted for supposing that tigers were unknown in India in Sanscrit times, then immigration must be very recent indeed.

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It would be interesting to know what period of time has elapsed since the separation of Ceylon from the mainland, or, what is still more important, the separation of Java and Sumatra; but that of Ceylon must presumably have occurred before the migration of the tiger to Southern India. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the tiger penetrated to Malacca before it reached Southern India. The animal is found in Java and Sumatra; and I have seen no discussion as to when tigers arrived there, but those islands were more recently joined to the mainland than was Ceylon. The Straits of Sunda are seventy miles wide; the distance between Sumatra and the mainland is thirty miles at the narrowest part of the strait, so that animals cannot have swum across, but they may have been aided by intervening islets. The fauna of Ceylon perhaps as closely approximates to that of Southern India as does that of Sumatra to the mainland; but Ceylon has many special plants. Certainly the seas north of Java and Sumatra are shallow, being generally within the 40-fathom line, which points to comparatively recent separation, which may have taken place in one great cataclysm, due to or indicated by the volcanic nature of the islands. But, all things considered, it can scarcely be supposed that the migration of the tiger into India is as recent as the introduction of Sanscrit. Another reason adduced for recent immigration is the impatience of the tiger to heat and thirst, but this is a characteristic of all carnivora as well as other animals in subtropical climates. The woolly nature of the cubs when born also has been referred to as pointing to an origin of the species in a cold climate; but this woolliness is characteristic of the young of most furred animals. The separation of Java

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and Sumatra from the Malay Peninsula has been remote enough for the evolution of new species.

The coloration of the Felidæ is a matter of profound interest. The transverse stripes of the tiger's body correspond roughly with the position of the ribs, and the "sun-spots" or white blaze above the eyes with the infra-orbital nerves — indicating a connection between coloration and structure. Whatever the cause, whether protective in the reed-beds in Central Asia, which are commonly supposed to be the cradle of the race, or obliterative in the jungles of India, the coloration of the tiger harmonises in a wonderful manner by day or by night with the surroundings it frequents, and thus facilitates its pursuit of prey.

It would be interesting to know what was the coloration of the great extinct cats, remains of which have been found in a fossil form in the four continents. Evidence and inference point to an arrangement of spots in the primitive cat tribe, although among the cats of to-day every variety of stripe and spot, as well as the uniform coloration of the lion and the puma, is to be seen. In hybrids between spotted and plain-coloured species the spotted animal predominates. In the young of nearly all, spots are present, and the young tend to exhibit the characters of the ancestral type. In the interbreeding of different races of mankind the more primitive type prevails in the offspring, being biologically predominant; and there is no reason why the same principle should not hold good with regard to the animal kingdom generally, and so point the way to the determination of the order of differentiation of species.

These considerations indicate that the progenitor of the great cats, such as the sabre-toothed tiger, was a

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spotted animal; that the leopard and jaguar are nearest to the ancestral type, and therefore predominate in hybrids in which they participate; that the transition from spots to stripes, due to environment and natural selection, is the next stage; and that the animal of one colour, such as the lion and the puma, is less primitive than the tiger. The one-coloured animals also have a coloration influenced by environment, being, generally speaking, among the desert-born, which tend to assume the dust-coloured character of their surroundings.

The tiger appears to predominate in the "Tigon," bred at Nawanagar and exhibited at the London Zoological Gardens. The sire was a tiger and the dam an Indian lioness. It is a fine male, with the face of the tiger, but there are no "sun spots"; there is no mane, but something of a ruff round the head and neck, resembling that of a tiger; the colour is leonine, and the stripes are plain on the legs and faintly visible on the body.

There is, in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, a stuffed hybrid of similar parentage, born in a menagerie at Edinburgh in 1826; it presents the same characteristics. The theory here developed is supported by other evidence. A hybrid between a leopard and a lioness, bred in the gardens at Kolhapur, appeared to belong entirely to the species of the sire, being covered with spots. Leonine characters were almost entirely absent. So it appears that the leopard cannot change his spots, derived from a spotted ancestor common to all the cats! A cross between a leopard-jaguar hybrid and a male lion bred at Chicago presented similar characteristics.

There is no record of a cross between leopard and

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tiger. What may have been such a hybrid was, however, described in *The Field* of 18th January 1908 as having been obtained in the Deccan. The description says: "Although the black markings present some approximation in pattern and mode of arrangement to the jaguar type, the head and back are ornamented by an altogether peculiar kind of meshed network of broad buff lines, the first mesh, which occupies the head, being much larger than all the others." The note states that the markings present no approximation to the tiger type, and that tigers are seldom found in the district. The markings, however, present just the features one would expect in such a hybrid, the leopard predominating for reasons already given. As for tigers being seldom found in the district, this favours the hybrid theory, for the two species would be more likely to mate where the tiger has wandered from its usual haunts and from the habitat of its own kind. I myself have shot more than twenty leopards in one district of the Deccan, and among them one which slightly approximated to the jaguar type, having a central spot in a large number of the rosettes. Tigers were ordinarily absent from that district, but I shot one wanderer there thirty years ago, and in other districts I have driven tigers and leopards out of the same cover together. There seems sufficient evidence, therefore, to indicate that this may have been a leopard-tiger hybrid.

There are other reasons besides those already given for supposing that the ancestral type of the Felidæ was a spotted animal. The stripes in the tiger are, in the main, elongated spots or rosettes, and most tigers have some spots as well as stripes. Many lions are more or less spotted; the young of both the lion and the puma

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are spotted, and the young of animals tend to resemble the ancestral type. A curious apparent exception is the hunting leopard, the cubs of which are a uniform grey, but the spots, which appear later, are concealed in the under-fur. The clouded leopard, which is found in the Eastern Himalayas and Burma, and the ocelot have markings which indicate a transition state between or a modification of spots and stripes, thus forming a link between the primitive and tigrine types of coloration. The same remark applies to many of the smaller cats. The lynxes are all spotted, at any rate in the immature stage of their existence; many are heavily spotted through life and others only on the flanks and limbs, as are the allied civets and genets of the viverrine family. The value of spots and stripes for protective purposes is evident to all who have observed animals in their native haunts.

White tigers have not infrequently been met with, and there is a race of such albinos in the state of Rewah. One of these, captured and kept in captivity, had a pure white body, with some stripes black, but mostly ash-coloured, due to the admixture of black and white hairs. The nose was mottled grey and pink instead of the normal pink; the eyes, though not pink, showed a deficiency of pigmentation. Other specimens have been described as white with deep reddish stripes, and cream-coloured with chocolate stripes. I never heard of a white tiger in the Deccan. White tigers have been known at the head-waters of the Narbada river since about 1870, so appear to have become established as a local albino race.

It is curious that, while melanism is not uncommon in panthers and jaguars, black tigers are practically

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unknown. What appears to have been an authentic instance of such a phenomenon, however, occurred in Chittagong in 1846, and was recorded in *The Field*, by Mr C. T. Buckland, F.Z.S., in 1889, in the following terms: "Before I go hence and am no more seen I wish to state that I and several others saw a dead black tiger at Chittagong, and from entries in my diary, which was pretty regularly kept, I know that it was in March 1846. The news was brought into the station that a dead black tiger was lying near the road that leads to Tipperah, distant about two miles from Chittagong. In the early morning we rode out to see it; but several of the party—Sir H. Ricketts, Mr Fulwar Skipwith, Captain Swatman and Captain Hore—are no longer alive, and I cannot produce any eyewitness to attest my statement, although several friends to whom I have written recollect that they heard something about it at the time.

"I remember perfectly well that the body of the animal was lying in the low bush-jungle, about twenty yards south of the road, and we dismounted to go and look at it. It was a full-sized tiger, and the skin was black or very dark brown, so that the stripes showed rather a darker black in the sunlight, just as the spots are visible on the skin of a black leopard. The tiger had been killed by a poisoned arrow, and had wandered away more than a mile from the place where it was wounded before it lay down to die. By the time we arrived the carcass was swollen, the flies were buzzing about it, and decomposition had set in, so that those of our party who knew best decided that the skin could not be saved. I was young and inexperienced, but Captain Swatman, who was in charge of the Government

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elephant kheddas, and Captain Hore (afterwards Lord Ruthven), of the 25th N. I., were well-known sportsmen, and had each of them killed many tigers. No doubt was expressed about the animal being a black tiger, and I have often mentioned the fact in conversation from time to time. For several weeks before we saw the dead body the natives had reported that there was a black tiger which infested the range of hills behind the military cantonment at Chittagong. More than once, when the herdsmen brought word that it had killed a cow, Captain Swatman sent an elephant and howdah for me, and we beat through the jungle in vain for it. Probably our tactics were bad, as we invariably went right up to the body of the murdered cow, and the tiger sneaked off on hearing the noise of the elephants into the extensive and impenetrable coverts. We did not attach any importance to the native statement that the tiger was black, as we supposed that the epithet 'black' was only a fanciful description of the animal. When, however, we had seen the black skin of the body of the dead tiger, we concluded that native authorities had not been drawing on their imagination when they used the epithet 'black.'"

I have reproduced Mr Buckland's account of this tiger at length because doubts have been cast on there being any authentic record of a black tiger. This seems to prove, as conclusively as possible without the existence of a skin, that there has been at least one such animal. Others have been referred to but cannot be definitely accepted. In *The Observer* of 11th January 1811 it is recorded that "a large black tiger, intended as a present from the King of Java to Bonaparte, taken in the *Gude Vrow* on the passage to France, is now to

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be seen at Kendrick's collection of rare foreign beasts and birds, at No. 40, opposite St James's Church, Piccadilly." No doubt this was a black panther, these animals being common in Java; and the word "tiger" is indiscriminately used for panther in many places, as in Africa. In 1913 a forest officer, Mr Hauxwell, wounded what he took to be a black tiger in the Bhamo District in Burma. He fired at the animal, which appeared to be quite black, at fifteen yards' range, and he measured the pugs, which were one foot eight inches in circumference, and evidently those of a tiger. In 1905 Major Capper, of the Central India Horse, saw in Travancore an animal which he took to be a black tiger. It was basking on a rock, and he observed it through his telescope. In the latter instance the animal was more probably a large black panther, for these are not uncommon in Travancore. Size is very deceptive. But in both instances, if these were tigers, as the Bhamo animal certainly was, the black appearance may have been due to the effect of light and shade. I recollect putting up an immense panther, which at first I took to be a tiger, in a deep nullah or depression; in the shadow it looked quite black, but it was a panther of normal coloration. The incidents related by Mr Hauxwell and Major Capper are recorded in *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society.*

The ground-colour of tigers and the colour of the stripes vary with age and in individuals. In some the ground-colour is deep sienna, and in some quite pale yellow; sometimes the stripes are a deep velvety black, and in others they have faded to brown, or are modified by the admixture of yellow hairs. Pigmentation is less in the young and in the old; this is characteristic

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generally of the young of animals, colour being at its brightest in maturity and fading with age. The length and thickness of fur, which vary with climate, also affect coloration. The arrangement of the stripes varies in different specimens: some stripes are single; some are doubled with a central space, like elongated rosettes. Some stripes are narrow and some very broad; there are brown spots on many skins.

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CHAPTER TEN

How Tigers Hunt

"Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin . . ."

TENNYSON.

I DO not propose to write much of the size of tigers. There has in the past been much exaggeration, due generally to faulty methods of measurement and no doubt to skins having been measured after removal. An early edition of an encyclopædia says: "The tiger is sometimes fifteen feet in length to the tip of the tail; an instance is on record of eighteen feet"! Twenty years ago there was a fine pair of Manchurian tigers in the London Zoological Gardens; the male certainly looked over ten feet in length. And I saw at Nijni Novgorod, thirty-five years ago, some immense skins from Siberia. The tiger probably attains a greater size in a temperate or cold climate. In India it is probable that occasionally it attains a length of a few inches over ten feet, if measured in a straight line between pegs placed at the nose and root of the tail, the tail included and measured separately. All measurements should be taken in this way; those taken round the curve will show five or six inches' greater length, and are uncertain as to the method of their taking. Human beings are not measured round the curves of the body, so why should tigers be so measured? The biggest tigers I have shot in the Deccan, measured properly, had a body-length of six feet eight inches, with three feet of

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tail. Only two reached this length. Tails are nearly always just three feet long, but sometimes several inches more. Tigresses are a foot to eighteen inches less in length. I have weighed few tigers; one very large and heavy animal weighed over five hundred pounds. It is probable that no tiger fairly measured ever exceeded ten feet and five or six inches. Some of eleven and even twelve feet have been recorded. A tiger is a very symmetrical animal; if one of eleven, or still more of twelve, feet in length is sketched out on a wall, in all its fearful symmetry, it will be seen that such a "monster of the prime" does not belong to the historic age of the earth. The size of the skull, in length and in width across the zygomatic arches, is not necessarily a criterion of the size of the tiger. The biggest skull I had was that of a man-eating tiger which I killed in 1897; the tiger had a six-foot-six-inch body and a three-foot tail; the skull was fourteen and three-quarter inches in length and nine and a half inches wide.

The tiger occupies a prominent place in Hindu mythology and in native superstitions, as is only to be expected considering the appearance, terrible armature and habits of this wonderful animal. The animist tribes regard it as a god; the people of India generally ascribe medicinal properties to many of its products. The liver is supposed to inspire with courage those who partake of it; the fat is a remedy for rheumatism; the claws and the clavicles, those peculiar rudimentary collar bones, are charms; even the whiskers may be ground down into poison; while the milk of the tigress is regarded as efficacious for sore eyes and other ills.

Tigers prey largely on domesticated cattle—buffaloes, oxen and horses. In jungle districts remote from

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human habitations they chiefly hunt deer, nilgai and pig. But few things come amiss to them. They have been known to attack such large animals as young elephants, camels and bison. I have known them attack, kill and devour bears on several occasions. They will eat snakes, crabs and fish when hard pressed for food. I have found a large python bitten in half and partially eaten by a tiger. They have been known to kill and eat panthers. Like panthers they prey largely on porcupines, and suffer from the quills sticking in their paws and other parts of their bodies. Tigers are at times given to cannibalism, the cubs usually being the victims; but instances have been known of adults being killed and partially devoured by their companions. In one case a tiger killed and ate a portion of his mate; they appeared to have quarrelled over a kill. I once found certain evidence, including a claw embedded in tiger's fur in a dropping, that a well-grown tiger had been thus killed and devoured.

That fine sportsman and naturalist and gallant soldier, the late F. C. Selous, tells us, in his *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences*, that "nothing is more certain than that all carnivorous animals hunt almost entirely by scent." This is not the case in India, where the tiger and leopard hunt by sight, aided by hearing, and have, indeed, very slight powers of scent. I have known, on many occasions, tigers pass close to buffalo calves tied up as bait and fail to kill them, the calves having evidently lain down or stood motionless for the time being. This has not been due to the tiger not wanting to kill, for a kill has in such circumstances often taken place a little farther on. The same remarks apply to the Felidæ generally. The tiger has fair powers of vision,

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being quick to see any movement; but it does not quickly make out a stationary object, and I have had one gaze at me with undiscerning eyes for some time from a distance of twenty yards when I have remained motionless. It has better hearing than most animals, as have all the cats.

Tigers are impatient of thirst; they are not found far from water, which is the reason why they are so often associated with peacocks, which they sometimes kill for food. They like shade, and are in general nocturnal, at any rate in the hot weather, when they lie down in the shade of trees or bushes, or not infrequently in a pool of water, soon after sunrise. In the hot weather a tiger will take up its abode in a district and wander in search of prey over the surrounding country, sometimes covering great distances. I have found the tracks of a tiger following a forest road for many miles. A tiger frequently makes a round which takes three or four days to complete, during which it visits the various water-holes on its route, both for drinking and in search of prey. It has a preference for paths and open watercourses, but when driven out in a beat will not usually follow a watercourse, but will walk on the banks, as though desirous of keeping the neighbourhood in view, cutting across the curves taken by the nullah.

The reason why tigers favour a particular locality—so that if one is killed another will in course of time take its place—is that the locality is in all respects, as to food, shade, water and seclusion, suited to the habits of the animal. When a tiger has been killed, however, the locality thus vacated will not be filled immediately, or, I think, until some months have

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elapsed. The reason is that tigers settle down for the hot weather; but more wandering takes place in the rainy season and the cold weather, when the vacant places are filled up. Sometimes a tiger or a pair will settle down for many years in one place. They prefer paths in the jungle, as do many animals, because they can see better, and also perhaps because it is easier walking where the sides are not brushed by leaves, grass and bushes.

In his book already referred to, Selous says he has only once seen a lion hunting by daylight. I have known tigers kill by daylight on several occasions, even in the hot weather. The lion, we are told, "seeks its prey by scent, either smelling the animals directly or following their tracks." Tigers follow the tracks of other animals unconsciously on paths and in watercourses, as most animals take such lines, so it must not be supposed that they are tracking their prey; they visit water-holes in search of prey, and catch animals drinking in such places, or lie in concealment at suitable spots, and so surprise them. They generally hunt singly, at any rate in the hot weather, when male and female usually appear to separate. Most of the tigers I have shot have been living alone, but I have sometimes found pairs, or a tigress with two large cubs at that season.

One reads of packs of fifteen or twenty lions together; I never heard of more than five tigers together. The tiger is generally a silent animal, and I have seldom heard one utter a sound except when molested. It has always seemed to me absurd to suppose that a lion should roar in search of prey, for it is not probable that the prey would await the approach of the roaring monster. However, although according to Selous

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lions hunt in silence, the African hunter notes on one occasion that they "began to roar loudly, a pretty good sign that they had already dined and were not hunting." Tigers may be more noisy at breeding times than at other seasons. Much has been said of tigers making a call resembling that of a sambar deer, as if with the intention of decoying or deceiving the deer, and so getting up to it. This far-fetched theory has no ground in fact, the call being merely one of the animal's notes, made on occasion when alarmed, or otherwise. No doubt this sound has much resemblance to the call of a sambar, just as that of the lion has to the ostrich. When charging, the tiger gives vent to a deep-throated roar, like the double cough of a howitzer in action.

The tiger attacks its prey with an overwhelming rush, inspired by ferocity due to hunger, not with a spring, such as is often depicted and described. It might spring from high on to lower ground on such occasions, but as a rule it rushes on its prey, which is seized and borne to the ground. The prey is seized generally by the throat, the tiger at the same time clasping with its paws and claws the chest and shoulder, or with one paw the nose or head of its victim. The neck frequently is broken by the backward bend or the weight of the animal in falling. Mr Selous never saw any evidence of a lion killing its prey by striking a heavy blow with one of its paws; my experience of tigers shows the same absence of such knock-out blows in the case of that animal. But I have seen a thick copper dish, which a beater was carrying on his back, battered by a tiger's paw, and with five claw-holes through it. The tiger struck the man down in passing, but, except for bruises, the beater was uninjured. No doubt all tigers do not

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kill in the same manner on all occasions, as method is adapted to circumstances.

The tiger invariably begins to eat at the haunch. There is no sucking of the blood from the throat, as is commonly supposed, and blood is not generally found in profusion, because the jugular vein is seldom severed. The stomach and intestines are taken out, neatly placed on one side, and not eaten. No doubt the amount eaten at a meal depends on the hunger of the tiger. Sometimes this will amount to half a good-sized buffalo calf. I have on several occasions found the kill untouched, the tiger not having been hungry. I have known five cattle killed at one attack on a herd, but think this unusual. Occasionally the prey is hamstrung, or otherwise clumsily killed. Perhaps usually this is the work of young and inexperienced tigers.

The tiger will pick up and carry its prey, even a heavy animal, a considerable distance, the hind feet usually dragging and leaving their mark on the ground. I have known a tigress jump a nullah some ten feet across with a large buffalo calf in her jaws. Usually the prey is dragged into shade near water, and the tiger drinks during and after feeding. It will then lie up near the kill, supposing it to have been feeding during the night, and resume the feast next evening. Frequently in the early morning—at dawn—before lying down for the siesta during the heat of the day, the tiger will perambulate in the vicinity of the kill.

It has been said sometimes that the tiger has an attendant jackal, which makes a peculiar cry, to which, from its sound, the name "pheal" has been given. No doubt jackals may frequently be seen in the vicinity of a tiger's kill, or near any dead animal; but I have

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heard the cry in localities where there were no tigers or panthers, and it is apparently merely a cry of alarm.

Tigers appear to have no regular breeding season. As the young remain so long with the parent, they probably breed only every second year. I have found a tigress with newly born cubs in April, and I have seen cubs that were born in November. The period of gestation is fourteen weeks. Five cubs have been found in the fœtus, and it is not uncommon to find a tigress with three cubs; but more than two seldom reach maturity, and that is the number usually found with the tigress. The two are generally male and female. They remain with the mother two years or more, leaving her to fend for themselves in the third year. It is commonly said that there are more tigresses than tigers; 65 per cent. of those I killed were males.

I have killed only one man-eating tiger in the Deccan during a residence of many years. But so much interest attaches to the story of man-eaters generally that I propose to devote a separate chapter to these monsters.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Image of War

"Far off in desert dank and rude,
The tiger holds its solitude."

HEBER.

THERE are two methods of hunting tigers generally employed in the Deccan, where elephants are not in common use. One is to drive the tiger from its lair with beaters, the number of men required varying according to the nature of the ground. The animal is thus driven up to the gun, posted on a tree, rock or other point of vantage. It is best to be off the ground—not for the sake of safety, but to increase the chances of a shot, as a tiger seldom looks up, but is quick to see on the level.

The expeditions after tigers which I organised myself became in course of time like a military campaign in miniature. The hunter was the general; the shikaris were the staff; the beaters formed the army. The range of country over which it was proposed to conduct the campaign against the great beasts was first determined. Maps were studied, information collected, and a tract of country selected as the theatre of operations. Scouts were sent in advance through the country to prospect, men being selected who were knowledgeable and intelligent, and who could be relied upon to bring true information as to what they saw and heard. I usually sent only one or two men on this duty.

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They would engage local shikaris, and plans would be modified according to reports. They went a month or more ahead to prepare the way. The route chosen would depend on their reports and on the nature of the season. Tigers must have water, and there might be that necessary element and tigers one season, where there may be none in the next owing to the scanty rainfall of the preceding one.

A knowledge of character is essential to enable one to judge of the value of the reports of different men—what to accept and what to reject. This one is prone to exaggerate—to see two tigers where there is one, or to magnify a leopard into the larger feline. That one is more careful, and by measuring the imprints of the tiger's paws with pieces of dry grass, will bring back evidence to prove whether the tracks in each locality are made by more than one animal. This prospecting of the country is of primary importance, for much depends on it. The expedition is invariably limited by time, by the season, if not by the period available to the sportsman. Tigers must be sought for in the hot season of the year, when the heat and the distribution of water limit their wanderings, and when the leaves of the forest have fallen and the jungle has thinned out sufficiently to expose them to view and fire when driven out. The advent of the rainy season will disperse the wandering tigers, and every depression in the ground will be filled with water.

Previous careful prospecting by skilful scouts will produce information as to localities in which tigers have taken up their abode, and may sometimes reveal exact knowledge as to their nightly prowling. Thus, when one locality has been cleared of game, the sportsman is

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not obliged to waste time in prospecting, but can march straight to the known haunts of other beasts. In this manner I shot in ten days on one occasion six tigers on ground which previously had taken me six weeks to cover with the same result.

The habits of the animals should be carefully studied, and one must remember that different tigers have different idiosyncrasies. This one is fond of lying in water during the heat of the day; that one retreats uphill when disturbed, instead of lingering in the shade of the ravine; one is a coward whom the herd-boy will drive from his cattle with a stick, another is so fierce that men are careful to avoid him, and will leave him unmolested in possession of his prey; one is given to wandering by daylight, another will never issue from his retreat until the sun has sunk below the horizon; some prey on the beasts of the forest, others prefer domesticated animals, or, rarely, even man himself. All these things have to be considered, and the habits of the wild beasts can be learned only by personal experience and intelligent observation. The character of the enemy must be known in order that the best plan of campaign may be devised for circumventing him. The principles of war apply.

When the theatre of operations and the general route have been decided upon, questions of supply and transport will arise. The country will probably furnish supplies of some kind. There will be fodder for the horses at some places, as well as sheep, goats, fowls, game and milk, and perhaps grain for the camp-followers. Tinned foods—to be avoided as far as possible—and medicines must not be forgotten. A judicious use of medicines among the sick may secure the useful

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A TIGER

This tiger has obviously been lying in water.

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assistance of the inhabitants. It may be found convenient to establish a base at the nearest railway station, or other suitable spot, where supplies of all kinds can be collected and sent for, camels being generally the best transport on the lines of communication. I have found this system useful in famine years, when there were no spare supplies in the country and the inhabitants were subsisting principally on bamboo seeds and other produce of the forest.

On the line of march it may generally be taken as an axiom that the local transport is most suitable; but recourse may often be had to camels or pack-ponies, or to human labour, for crossing country impassable for wheeled vehicles, for it is sometimes desirable to leave the beaten track. The inconvenience of using carts from another district will be evident when it is found that the deep ruts worn by local vehicles are not of suitable width for them. For reducing transport it is essential to dispense with all superfluous camp equipage. Small tents of the Cabul pattern, seven or eight feet square, suffice for shelter, are light, and can be pitched in the shade of small trees in places where there would not be space for larger tents.

The camp should be accompanied by five or six mounted men; men on foot are too slow, as in war, for bringing information from a distance and for collecting the detachments of beaters who are scattered in the different villages, sometimes at a considerable distance from each other and from the scene of operations. I used to take half-a-dozen men of my regiment and mount them on small ponies, obtainable in the Deccan for twenty or thirty rupees each. By this plan one can keep a look-out for game within a radius of at least

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ten miles from camp, and so cover a wide extent of country and save much time and trouble.

We will suppose, then, that the route has been selected, and the camp, which has been sent on ahead, is pitched beneath umbrageous trees. Relays of horses have been posted every eight or ten miles at selected spots on the seventy or eighty miles one has to ride. A small map indicating the route may be taken in the pocket, and one can start at daybreak and ride straight across country from point to point, and arrive in camp in the early afternoon. The camp arrangements should be inspected on arrival; the horses and other cattle seen to — that they are picketed in shade and safety from predaceous beasts. Questions of supply are inquired into, especially with regard to water, that for drinking being boiled, filtered and perhaps chemically treated. Useful shifts and expedients are devised for adding to the comfort of the camp. The shikaris are interviewed, and information regarding tigers is collated. A party of shikaris has been sent on ahead with orders to picket at suitable spots young buffaloes as bait for tigers.

Perhaps one of these has been killed, and beaters have been assembled if the place is not too far to beat that day. More often the shikaris will not have done much. They require the presence of the chief to spur them into action. Next morning one may take five or six buffaloes and go out for the day. The jungle paths, the dry beds of streams and the margins of the pools form the book of nature, in which can be plainly discerned the comings and goings of the wild beasts. Buffaloes are picketed at suitable spots where there is water, shade, and perhaps tracks; they are securely

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fastened with a stout rope round one foreleg and attached to a peg or tree.

Next morning, at daybreak, one is up betimes to visit first the most distant buffalo, for they should not be approached too early. After the bloody feast of the night the tiger frequently prowls round the vicinity of the kill for some time in the cool of the early morning, and by going too soon it may be disturbed and frightened off to a distance. But the burning rays of the sun force the shade-loving beast to seek an umbrageous retreat near its prey, where it sleeps during the heat of the day.

We are now nearing the place where the buffalo was picketed. The ground is carefully scrutinised, but no tracks are seen. The buffalo is viewed from a distance, a tree being climbed for the purpose if need be; the spot for this inspection has been chosen when the animal was tied up. Do not approach too near; the tiger may be on the alert. Is the buffalo there, alive or dead? It is lying on the ground, and appears very still, but a view through the binoculars reveals the flicking of an ear and an occasional whisk of the tail to keep off the flies. The wretched beast is watered and washed in the pool; fresh grass is cut and placed before it, and it is again abandoned to its weary vigil. It is a process that goes to the heart for the pitiable beast, but the death of one may save many cattle.

The second place is approached in like manner. A crow, perched on a tree above, caws loudly, looking the while with beady eyes at something below. It is a suspicious sign, accentuated by the appearance of a few dark specks—vultures circling in the sky overhead—and rendered almost a certainty by the fresh impress of the tiger's paws seen upon the dusty path. Over the

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tracks are the marks of porcupines and other nocturnal animals, pointing to the great beast having passed by early in the night. A view from a distance shows that the buffalo has gone. Only a small quantity of the grass left with it has been eaten. Evidently an early kill. There is a broken piece of rope with which it was picketed, and that dark patch may be blood. The trail shows that the carcass has been dragged up a small channel on the opposite side of the watercourse. If all is well arranged, nothing can now avert the tiger's fate.

We are now in contact with the enemy. Strategy has ended, so far as this animal is concerned, and tactics have begun. There is a rapid gallop back to camp, where mounted men are in readiness, and are soon off to collect beaters from the surrounding hamlets, sometimes having to go a distance of five or six miles. The nature of the ground determines the number of men required for the beat, which may amount from a dozen to a hundred or more. It is better to have too many than too few. They arrive in detachments, and are assembled near the camp, and when all is ready we march off towards the scene of action. Arrived within a mile or so of the locality to be beaten a halt is called, and the army is split up into at least two divisions. In one—generally the smaller division—the more expert and intelligent men are placed, these being stops to be posted at the flanks of the beat to turn the tiger should he attempt to break out. The remainder, who are to act as beaters, are marshalled by the shikaris, and placed under the direction of trusty men. Careful directions are given that they are to be kept in line with small intervals, according to the nature of the ground. The

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arrangement of the beat has been thought out when the buffalo was picketed.

The first division is marched off with the sportsman and the head shikari. Skirting the jungle in which the tiger is supposed to be, the men are posted as stops at intervals along the flank of the beat, overlooking nullahs and other likely places where the tiger might attempt to break out, and each man having instructions as to what he is to do. Generally a slight noise, such as the breaking of a dry stick, is enough to turn the animal; sometimes clapping of the hands, or even shouting, is necessary. Arrived at the apex of the rough triangle formed by beaters as a base and stops on the flanks, the sportsman takes up his position where he has a good field of view and fire, and the stops on the other flank are posted by the head shikari on his way back to the beaters. All is now ready.

As a general rule an animal should be driven out in the direction he would naturally take, any probability of an attempt to break back through the beat or the stops being thus minimised. The beat has been arranged on this basis, the direction being indicated by knowledge of the ground and of the habits of the tiger. The beaters advance under the direction of the head shikari, and will raise quite enough uproar without any orders on this point. The sportsman must be on the alert; every sense must be strained, and no precautionary detail omitted. The moment for which all these preparations have been made is at hand. He must not forget to examine his barrels and cartridges, and to cock his rifle the instant he has taken up his position. He must avoid noise and movement; the clink of a ring on the barrels or the glint of sunshine on a bright

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muzzle may suffice to turn the game. The beat approaches; the discordant noise of the beaters comes nearer. Is the beat empty?

But hark! The sound of a heavy though velvet footfall breaks upon the listening ear—a great beast trampling on the dead leaves that lie thick upon the ground. Now the heavy breathing can be heard. Be still, oh, beating heart! steady, oh, trembling hand, or all your labour will have been in vain! The tiger emerges and stands for a moment, gleaming golden in the sunlight, and listening to the noise that pursues him. Then with a gruff roar he comes on, taking exactly the line that had been foreseen. The moment has arrived. A bead is drawn on the shoulder, the bullet speeds home; the tiger falls, but, roaring fiercely, raises himself upon his haunches. He has received his death-wound; but fire again, for the enemy is dangerous so long as he lives and has the power to strike. So in war Napoleon said: "Pursue the enemy with your sword in his ribs. The Emperor is of opinion that in war nothing is done so long as anything remains to be done."

Should the tiger escape, only wounded, he must be followed up with great care and circumspection, or lives may be lost. But if attention is paid to every detail this dangerous operation may generally be carried out with success. The hunter follows on the blood-tracks, if such there be, alert and with his rifle ready, applying his knowledge of jungle-craft if there be no tracks to determine the probable line of the tiger's retreat. Scouts are placed in commanding positions on the flanks, and others, accompanying the pursuer, climb trees at intervals to look out ahead and point out the position of the stricken beast if they can see it. The line

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of retreat should be watched if possible by posting men beyond the position the tiger has taken up. Should anyone be wounded in the encounter one must know how to treat the wounds, and for this purpose carbolic acid and other remedies should be at hand.

While these operations have been in progress, several parties, each with a mounted messenger, have been posted at villages eight or ten miles off, in the vicinity of which tigers are known to be. Here they have been picketing young buffaloes as bait, and when a kill is reported the mounted man rides to camp post-haste with the information, leaving other men on the spot to collect beaters. If the sportsman is in camp all is quickly arranged; if out after other game the messenger is directed to the spot. Perhaps he arrives just when the beat is concluded. We then go off straight to the place he has come from, and the tiger is driven out and killed in the manner already described. By this method two or three tigers may be shot in one day at a distance from camp in either direction; but it is strenuous work in the hot weather, with the thermometer at over 100 degrees in the shade. Frequently I have walked daily for days at a time twenty or more miles in preliminary hunting, in search of tracks and game. A day or two before the time arrives to depart to new ground a party is sent on to make all necessary arrangements, and we move rapidly the fifteen or twenty miles, perhaps by night to escape the great heat of the day, or in the early morning to arrive in time to drive out any tigers that may have been marked down. In this manner a good bag of tigers may be made in a six weeks' expedition. This system of drives had been employed in war, not only by Lord Kitchener in his famous drives up to the block-house

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line in South Africa, but more than a hundred years before by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, who utilised both drives and block-houses in the reduction of the inhabitants of Coorg. Drives for wild beasts, in which whole armies participated, formed a favourite recreation of Changiz Khan and the Emperor Babar, the founder of the Mughal Empire.

The other method of shooting tigers in the Deccan is that of sitting up on a platform constructed in a tree over a kill or a live animal. Many sportsmen have met with success by this method; it has the advantage of saving the expense of beaters, which is a heavy item where large numbers are required. It is, moreover, interesting to wait in concealment, where one can observe many jungle sights and sounds. Personally, however, I have seldom adopted it, and that only in early days on two or three occasions. I do not possess the requisite patience, and like to be as much as possible on the move, and have consequently found it more interesting to hunt down my game and, finally, to arrange to drive it out, rather than lurk in ambush on the chance of a shot. In bygone days my father kept his own elephant, and used to hunt down tigers on elephant-back.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

The Jungles of Mahor

"Pan is not dead, but of all the classic hierarchy alone survives in triumph; goat-footed, with a gleeful and an angry look, the type of the shaggy world; and in every wood, if you go with a spirit properly prepared, you shall hear the note of his pipe."—R. L. STEVENSON.

ALTHOUGH tigers are not so numerous as they were sixty or seventy years ago they are still abundant in favourable localities. The chief enemy of great game is to be found in the spread of railways, which not only open up fresh shooting-grounds, rendered still more accessible by the advent of the motor-car, but tend to the exploitation of the country, the reclaiming of waste lands and the extension of cultivation. At the same time it must not be supposed that tigers are more abundant in great forests and vast, uninhabited regions. They are to be sought for rather in the neighbourhood of the habitations of man, provided there remain sufficient secluded haunts to furnish them with cool and sheltered retreats. In the great forests the bison and elephant love to roam, far from the haunts of man, where no sounds save those of nature strike upon the ear and where the wild beasts can wander in peace over almost untrodden solitudes. But man brings with him domesticated animals, and extends cultivation, the former an attraction to the cattle-loving tiger, the latter enticing the antelope, deer and pig, on which the great cats chiefly prey.

The great beasts of prey have their uses. If they

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are killed off, the deer, antelope and pig devastate the husbandman's crops. Moreover they help to improve the breed of the species on which they prey, for the weaklings and otherwise unfit generally furnish the first victims, and thus do not survive to breed a defective race; the fittest survive. On the other hand, if the ruminating animals are exterminated, the tigers, bereft of their natural prey, become cattle-killers, and are prone to attack man himself when impelled by hunger. It is best that both carnivora and ruminants should preserve their proper proportions, so that the balance of nature may be maintained.

The district of Mahor, in the northern part of Hyderabad, is well watered, intersected by ranges of jungle-clad hills and characterised by cool, well-wooded valleys, in which the tiger, impatient of thirst and heat, finds plentiful water and shade. But the wild animals which furnish the natural prey of the great carnivora were forty years ago by no means everywhere abundant. Still, in places, there were plentiful pig and nilgai and some sambar and spotted deer. A portion of the district lay to the north of the Pein Gunga, south of which there was a forest reserve in British territory which harboured plenty of game. I found Mahor well stocked with tigers thirty-five years ago.

The month of March ushers in the hot weather in the Deccan. It comes with a scorching blast, which gladdens the heart of the sportsman, who knows that it will rapidly thin out the leafy jungle and dry up the water, thus limiting the extent of the tigers' wanderings. The nights are still pleasant, and in the early morning, before the sun has risen, the air is still fresh, and in watercourses and low ground the dew lies upon the grass, but is soon

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sucked up by the rays of the risen sun. In the daytime the birds are beginning to gasp with open beaks, and all living creatures seek the shade of tree and copse. In the great jungles which stretch beyond the blue hills, towards which the sportsman's eyes are now turned, the tigers have given up wandering by day. Their peregrinations in search of prey take place during the dark hours of the night, when the earth lies cool under the star-spangled canopy of the heavens; in the heat of the day they rest in umbrageous solitudes or lie in shady pools.

The camp and shikaris are getting ready in the compound of my bungalow, for they are to start a week ahead in order to be ready on the bank of the Pein Gunga, seventy miles distant, when I arrive there. Sepoys and servants are busy packing the bullock-carts with provisions, guns, camp equipage and all the paraphernalia required for camp life. Stores are packed in small wooden cases, a week's supply in each. Two camels are groaning under their loads; ponies are there for my sepoys, whose duty it will be to collect beaters and to stiffen the line. Finally, there is a herd of young buffaloes for bait for tigers, with their driver, an old man called by the camp "Brook Sahib," perhaps owing to a fanciful resemblance to a European of that name. In place of the usual turban he wore on his head a battered old pith hat, and his shrivelled body was hung with gourds containing his provisions for the march. His only other garments were a strip of cloth round his loins and a ragged khaki jacket with no sleeves. Over his shoulder he carried a rusty spear. It was nine o'clock. The moon was just rising, a silver disc, over the black rim of the horizon behind the palm-trees when the

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procession started, the camels complaining loudly, the bells tinkling at the necks of the yoked oxen, the carts creaking, the men shouting, and old "Brook Sahib" bringing up the rear, belabouring his grunting charges, until all disappeared in a cloud of dust down the road towards the distant line of hills in the east.

A week later, before daybreak, my Arab horse stood at the door, and other horses had been posted on the way to the distant jungle, so that no time need be wasted on the road. There was a ride of seventy miles in front of me, but the journey was not tedious, as it lay through varied scenery. For the first forty miles it was across flat country, mostly under cultivation, abounding in antelope. This brought me to Umerkhed, a place infamous for atrocious murders by Thugs in the "happy days" before the advent of English rule. Close by, a party of travellers had been strangled within the memory of men still living. The robbers, disguised as harmless travellers, had mixed with a dozen people going from Hyderabad to Nagpur. Each Thug had cunningly singled out a victim, and at a given signal fell each man upon his quarry, and in a moment the whole party were strangled with knotted handkerchiefs. Graves had already been prepared by men sent on for the purpose, and the victims were buried in a dry watercourse close at hand; in a short time all traces of the crime were obliterated.

On leaving Umerkhed the path turned into a jungle-clad valley through a range of hills. As I rode through the valley the short, sharp bark of a rib-faced deer re-echoed on the hillside ahead, and the cry was repeated farther on, and then taken up by a peacock, which uttered the trumpet-note of alarm. Evidently a tiger or panther

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was afoot. A few miles farther on I splashed through the shrunken waters of the Pein Gunga and rode into my camp, pitched under a large banyan-tree on the farther bank of the river. I was met by my Bhil shikari, Bhima, who lived in the adjacent hamlet. Bhima was a remarkable man, with a wonderful eye for country. In the beat he never made a mistake, and he was with me in the killing of some thirty tigers during three seasons, when he was my head man.

There were other shikaris besides Bhima. There was old Nathu, who grew garrulous with advancing years, and was fond of relating the doughty deeds of his master and himself, with the addition of many embellishments. He feared nothing. He would rush up to a wounded, dying tiger and belabour the monster with tongue and stick. Simple-minded and honest, Nathu would carry on cheerfully and tirelessly through a long day's work notwithstanding the burthen of sixty years. His face had been scarred and pulled on one side by a leopard's claws; but he regarded leopards with contempt, and held that the tiger was the only big beast worth hunting. He was rather boastful at times, and would say that he did not mind if a tiger did kill him. "A man can die but once!" Bhima would then chaff him, saying that he would probably be killed by a hyena! Then there was little Chunder, the gentlest and most faithful of beings, possessed of a rare intelligence unclouded by the fumes of spirituous liquors, for he would touch none of them. He was a trustworthy man to send out exploring the country preparatory to an expedition, to conciliate the inhabitants and to bring news that could be relied upon. There was also the faithful sepoy orderly, Shaikh Karim, who managed all camp arrangements and, with other sepoys,

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stiffened the line of beaters. Once when mauled by a tiger his first inquiry, when the beast had left him, was as to the safety of his master. Oh, faithful friends and followers, all now gone to the "Happy Hunting Grounds," when the time, that cannot be far distant, comes for me to cross the river which you have already passed, may you be there to greet me on the bank of the Stygian stream with news of the sport to be had in the jungles behind the veil!

Bhima had news of tigers. The country was an ideal haunt for them. The river flowed through a rocky bed for many miles between forest-clad hills and through a valley of varying width. On one side the forest and the hills marched down to the water's edge. On the other was a strip of level ground between the river and the hills, containing a few scattered hamlets, whose inhabitants cultivated the plain and maintained herds of cattle. Beyond the cultivated tract the forest of bastard teak and bamboo grew abruptly, so that there was a sharp line between the desert and the sown, and filled the valleys and ravines that cut deep into the mountain range. In these valleys the tigers had their habitat as well as in the reserve forest on the other bank, where they found shade, water and game in abundance, whilst at night they could issue forth to prey on the village herds which went to graze in the jungle or drink at the river, and left stragglers from their number.

On a distant hill overlooking a broad valley was the Ziarat of Shaikh Farid, a Muhammadan saint, at whose tomb, gleaming white upon the cliff, my shikaris insisted that rites must be performed to propitiate the jungle god. Without this ceremony, they said, no success would attend our efforts. Next morning we

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went to the Ziarat, taking buffaloes as bait for tigers, and accompanied by the whole of the denizens of the camp and most of those of Bhima's village, Hindu and Muhammadan alike. A goat was taken for the sacrifice, killed at the tomb, and its flesh cooked and eaten, all partaking of the feast. Towards evening we descended to the valley, where we found tracks of a tigress, and we tied up two young buffaloes within view of the patron saint.

This ceremony brought us success, for I killed here three tigers, one of which appeared to have been rolling on a porcupine, for some quills were sticking in wounds in the back of his neck; parasitic worms exuded from one of his eyes. A wounded tigress charged old Nathu fiercely, but he stood his ground unafraid, and we were able to shoot the beast before she reached him.

The animist religion of the jungle approximates to the worship of the great god Pan and to the system of sacrifice recorded in the Old Testament. A narrow path ran up the valley where we killed these tigers. Here were tracks of many beasts. A bear had shambled along, and a panther's pugmarks overlay his footprints. Deer and blue bull, four-horned antelope, pigs, porcupines, pea-fowl, partridges and little quail — all these had passed by in the night or in the early morning. Beside the path, in a wretched tenement of sticks and stones that formed the abode of the jungle god, that deity was represented by a red painted stone, over which his banners, a few red and white rags, fluttered in the breeze. Like Abraham of old, my shikaris dragged a kid to the shrine and anointed its head with country wine, and the goat bowed down before the graven image and was immediately slaughtered and its blood

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spilt upon the threshold. A severed foot was hung as an offering within the sacred tenement.

Lower down the river I encamped amid what was indeed the Empire of Nature. The forest was beautiful beyond description. Giant trees—the growth of ages—stood upon the river bank, their topmost branches dotted with vultures and their nests. The river flowed with serpentine course in a rocky bed strewn with great boulders and containing broad reaches, where crocodiles lay like logs upon the surface, and otters disported themselves in pursuit of fish. Sometimes the stream narrowed to a silver thread between stretches of sand or murmured over pebbly shallows. On the margin, kept green by perennial moisture, grew thick brakes of cane and grass jungle; graceful bamboos bowed their feathery branches to the water, and beyond the level the hillsides were thickly grown with teak and other trees. Shady nullahs, containing here and there a pool of water, wound their way to join the river.

In the forest was an infinite variety of animal life. Bison, though scarce, were to be met with. The great sign-manual of the tiger lay upon the paths and the margins of the pools. The half-devoured body of a four-horned antelope, placed for concealment in the fork of a tree, indicated the presence of a panther. Claw-marks all the way up the bole of a giant pipal-tree showed where a bear had climbed in search of honey. The bark rubbed off trees told of stags polishing their antlers—sambar on the hill-top, and spotted deer which frequented the river banks, where their graceful forms were reflected in the water. Wild dogs standing in a glen represented the vermin, which were unable to make any impression on so vast a quantity of game.

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THE GREAT LHONA TIGER

This is from the stuffed head of a monster of his kind.

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From almost every thicket a little four-horned antelope rushed out with white scut in air; pea-fowl filled the shady spaces, and monkeys with black faces grinned and chattered overhead.

Here on every side resounded the voices of the forest. In the glades and on the banks of the stream the spotted deer were seldom silent. Constantly the belling of the stags or the shrill bark of the hinds resounded in the woods. In the evening the harsh, grating cry of a panther came from the neighbouring hills, and at morn and at the setting of the sun the resonant "Miaou! Miaou!" of the pea-fowl struck upon the listening ear. The deep purr or distant roar of a tiger, answered by a voice of fear in the jungle, might sometimes disturb the silence of the night. The chattering of monkeys, the monotonous shriek of the coel, the brain-fever bird, the ceaseless stridulation of cicadas, completed the chorus of Nature's orchestra; all these and other sounds struck upon the ear and gladdened the solitude of the woods.

I killed four tigers in a fine valley away from the river, where the jungle hamlet of Ganeshpur stood alone and isolated in the wilds. Here the hills fell with precipitous descent to a wooded ravine, in which one great tiger gave me a long and arduous chase, interrupted for some days by my suffering from sunstroke. He was in the habit of lying immersed in a pool in the heat of the day, and my shikaris said he showed only the tip of his tail above the surface; this extremity, moving to and fro, alone betrayed his presence in the bath! Another immense tiger had taken up his abode in the same place when I went there the following year, and was killed without difficulty. Then I shot a tigress who would always make off to some distant haunt soon after

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daylight, and so could not be found in the beat. But one morning I approached the spot before sunrise, and just as the sun rose I took off my boots and stalked and shot her where she lay beside her victim of the night. While I was stalking this tigress a four-horned antelope started barking close to me, the only occasion on which I have heard the voice of this animal. Fortunately this did not startle the tigress.

On arrival one evening at my next camp I heard a peculiar whimpering and, running out with my rifle, saw several wild dogs standing about. One of these I shot, and the others ran off. They had killed and partially devoured a deer in a nullah close by. Near this spot, after a great tiger had eluded us for some days, we at length tracked him down into a secluded glen with precipitous sides. Driven forth by a crowd of beaters, this monarch of the glen strode out, erect and fearless, his fierce eyes gleaming in the noonday sun, and at ten yards' distance stopped in front of me, his open jaws dripping saliva, for it was a very hot day.

I put a bullet behind his shoulder, and without uttering a sound he plunged forward into a patch of long grass, where he disappeared. I followed him at once, and walked close up to him before seeing him where he lay dead, so wonderfully did his coloration assimilate with the surroundings. Nor could I but feel regret for the noble life that I had taken. The glen in which the tiger lay was strewn with huge boulders torn by wind and weather from the rocks above, and contained giant trees—the growth of ages. It had probably been a stronghold of tigers through countless years. In the rainy seasons a waterfall had poured down the cliffs at the head of the ravine, where they fell sheer to the

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valley below, and had worn a basin deep in the living rock. From the rocks above this basin, which now contained the only water in the glen, were suspended huge stalactites, which must have taken æons of time to form. From here, unmolesting and unmolested, the tiger had issued forth on his nightly quest for prey, until a bullet stretched him dead at the entrance to his lair.

In the next beat I hit a galloping tiger too far back. I followed on the spots of blood for a quarter of a mile and found that he had dropped dead when trying to climb a steep bank. But tiger-hunts which involve the following of wounded animals do not always end so simply. A few miles farther on I wounded a tiger in the back; he went on into long grass, and then a leopard came out, which I shot dead. Following up the tiger, I came suddenly upon him lying under a tree, at a distance of a few feet; he raised his head, and a green glow came into his eyes, but before he had time to move I shot him through the heart. There is no "safety first" in tiger-hunting! It was at the next camp that I came across evidences of a cannibal tiger. There was a party of three, which once had been four—a tiger, a tigress and a nearly full-grown cub. The tiger was going lame, one of his hind-legs making a plantigrade track like that of a bear. One day I examined a dropping and found it to consist of tiger's hair, with a claw embedded in the middle, so I concluded that the tiger had had a fight with the other cub and had killed and devoured him, being himself injured in the encounter. Unfortunately I had to abandon the hunt after these tigers, being recalled from leave before I could get them marked down.

In these remote regions the natives looked on every

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white man as a medicine-man, perhaps not wholly without reason. I am not a medical practitioner, but always have a medicine chest, and was thus enabled to minister to the sick. I treated a few cases of fever and other ailments, and my fame as a doctor spread far and wide; people flocked in from outlying hamlets. Those with pains in their abdomens were treated with pills and essence of ginger, while quinine was in great request. It was not possible to accomplish all that was demanded. The old expected to be made young, the blind to see and the lame to walk, and were much disappointed at my failure to restore their sight or limbs, or to renovate their youth, for it was before the days of the thyroid gland. But rum in small doses, tempered with essence of ginger and administered to aged men, was found to have a remarkably beneficial effect; and the old fellows would come each day for the dose to be repeated, declaring that they had not felt so young for years. My remedies were probably not less effective than the extract of wild dog's liver and tiger's fat, on which they pinned their faith.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Panther or Leopard

"How waked the spotted beasts of prey,
Deep sleeping from the face of day."

JOAQUIN MILLER.

THE panther or leopard ranges the length and breadth of Africa and Asia, from the Atlantic to the China Seas. I have seen at Nijni Novgorod skins from the Caucasus and from the farthest confines of Siberia, and at Astrachan pelts from Persia. It is only to be expected that with such a vast variety of climate and general environment there should be a considerable variation in minor characteristics. Perhaps the tendency to establish two species has been accentuated by confusion of nomenclature, the animal being called panther in some parts of the country and leopard in others. The reasons generally given for a separation of species are based on differences of size, texture of fur and shape of skull. They were even supposed by some to differ in character, the smaller animal being considered the fiercer. There was said to be a large species, characterised by an elongated skull, having a pronounced occipital ridge and a smooth, bright coat; the smaller so-called species having a round skull, no occipital ridge, and a rough and less brightly coloured coat. To these alleged differences Sterndale added that Temminck had noted that the larger so-called species had twenty-two caudal vertebræ and the smaller twenty-eight. I have found a medium-sized panther to

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have twenty-four vertebræ in the tail, and another twenty-six; other sportsmen have noted twenty-three and twenty-four. This alleged difference is probably based on the examination of a limited number of specimens.

Size is no criterion, or we might separate the tiger into different species. The distinctions in form of skull and texture of fur are indications of age, and sometimes, in the case of fur, of environment, and are not peculiar to the panther. They are found in the tiger also. In mature animals there is more pigmentation, resulting in a brighter-coloured coat. In very old animals the colour fades. In the young, and in cold climates and seasons, thicker and longer fur, and even an under-pelage, may be expected. In open country colour is naturally lighter than in dense forests and damp climates, where darker animals are found. The tendency appears to be for coloration to approximate to the environment, as in the desert-born, which assimilate to the dusty colour of the soil. While this is the outcome of evolution, its rapid action may be seen in the case of fish. You will find blue trout in the glacial streams of Norway and black ones in the gloomy depths of rocky pools, and they will rapidly take on these characters on change of environment.

Panthers from different localities vary considerably in coloration, which is remarkably protective by day, in the dusk, and by night. Much has already been written regarding spotted animals in the chapter on the tiger, and reasons have been given for supposing that the coloration of the panther is the primitive type of the great Felidæ. Spots seem to be especially a provision of nature in the animal world, perhaps because

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they break up the conspicuous character of a uniform colour, and are thus essentially protective. They are found not only in the cats but in many species, whether in the young only or in the mature animal. The typical hyenas are the striped and spotted species, the latter inhabiting Africa only. But everything points to the spotted species being the more primitive. In prehistoric days hyenas existed in Europe, where fossils indicate that the spotted hyena was the more common of the two. The spotted species is nearer the civets, an indication of its being an earlier type, and, like the cave hyenas, it is the larger and more powerful of the two.

But not only the carnivorous animals exhibit characters pointing to a spotted ancestral type. Most of the deer tribe, though now in general of a uniform colour, belong to the same category. Among the spotted species are the chital and the little mouse-deer or chevrotain. Other species have spotted young and some have seasonal spots. The young of the red deer, the swamp deer, the roe-deer, the Chinese water-deer and the Virginian deer are spotted; the hog-deer and the Javanese deer are spotted in summer, and the musk-deer is frequently spotted; so that the arguments which apply to the probability of a spotted ancestor in the case of the great cats apply also to the deer.

Spots and stripes tend to concealment by night in turning the animal to a uniform grey that blends with dusk or moonlight. At night a panther will move from shade to shade like some evanescent phantom, even in bright moonlight, and it blends like a shadow with the dusk. I had great difficulty in distinguishing a panther which was lying dead under some bushes, where it

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blended with the chequered sunshine and shadow of the leaves; and when looking for, and expecting to see, a panther I have been on the point of firing at such a patch of sunlight and shadow.

I have heard of no albino panther, unless one described in *The View of Hindustan*, by Thomas Pennant, 1798, may have been one; it was "a leopard of a dirty-white colour, spotted with grey, taken near Agra," and presented to the Emperor Jehangir.

Black panthers are not uncommon, but are rare in the Deccan, where I never saw one. They are common in Java and the Malay States, where the forests are dense and the climate is moist. They are found in the Nilgiris and in Travancore and Mysore. One writer has suggested that in Java their colour is due to natural selection, for the purpose of facilitating their pursuit of the black gibbons on which they prey; but surely this is the theory of protective coloration run wild! A black panther, taken in the Sunderbunds, is said by Thomas Pennant to have been presented by Warren Hastings to the menagerie in the Tower of London.

It is generally accepted that the black panther is a *lusus naturæ*, and not a separate species, and litters have been observed containing both black and fulvous cubs. Melanism is hereditary, as one would expect of this and other transmitted characteristics. Colonel Ferris recorded in *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* the case of a pair of black panthers from North China, which twice bred in captivity at Kolhapur, and each time produced black cubs. A male bred with a fulvous female; the resulting cub had larger, blacker and more glossy spots than usual, and the rosettes were larger and more defined. Colonel Ferris thought that this pair

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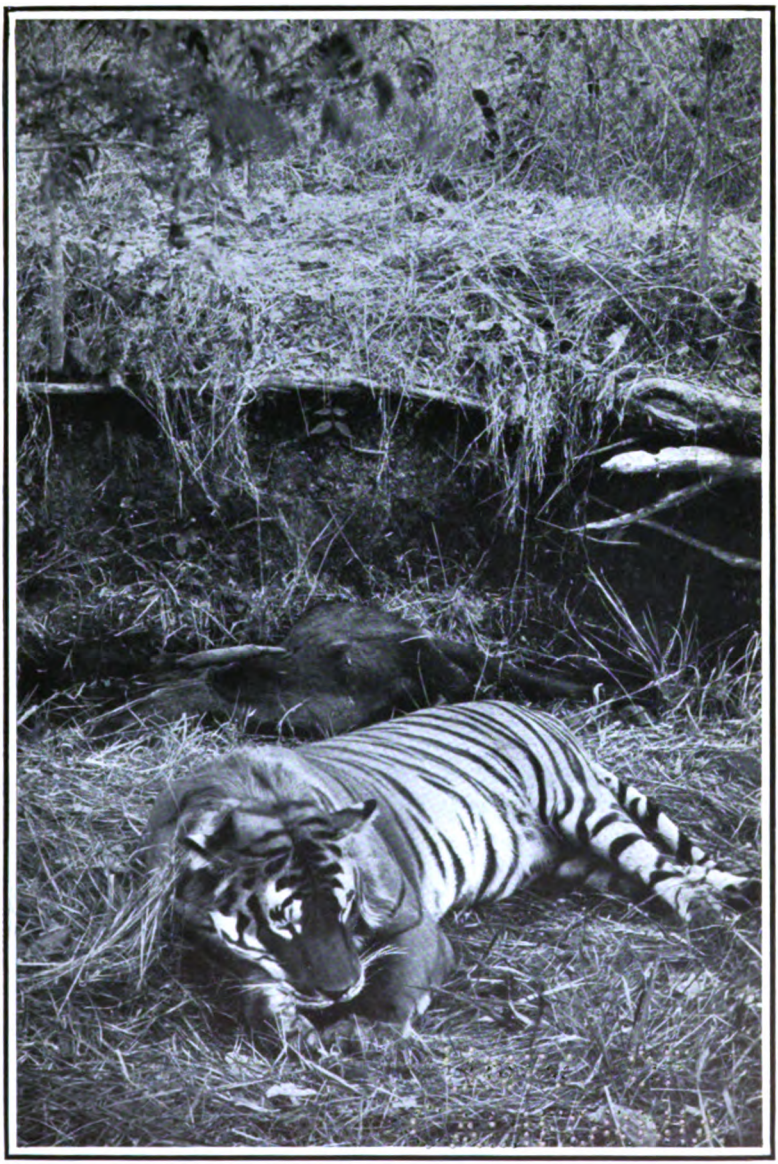

TIGER AND KILL

When the tiger has killed his prey, he drags it into cover to devour at his leisure. After eating he lies up near it to protect the remains from marauding hyenas, jackals, and vultures.

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belonged to a distinct species. They were uniform black, but in the sunlight a faint trace of spots was visible on the sides, and lower down on the belly the spots were more apparent and the hair was of a deep brown. The spots were not, however, " five-finger-tipped or circular broken rosettes, but entirely black blotches without annulation. The tongue was brilliant pink, and the palate of the male pink, but on that of the female there were two small black spots. Under the tongue both were blackish ; the gums above and below the front teeth and in which they were set were black." He mentions a case of a black panther shot in Canara having a black tongue ; this is an interesting point, calling for further evidence. One shot by Colonel Grantham had a pink tongue. The so-called black panther appears to be generally more dark brown than black, and the rosettes stand out plainly in the sunlight. A few black panthers have been seen in Africa, and black jaguars, as noted by Bates in his *Naturalist on the River Amazons*, are not uncommon in South America. Was there ever a black puma?

While panthers vary greatly in size, I have not found this to be the case in the Deccan, except the normal difference due to age and sex, and the ordinary variations in size that one finds in most animals. The difference between male and female is marked, the latter being much the smaller, as in the tiger. Cubs leave the parent and fend for themselves before maturity, and so small animals are found, having a roughish fur and round skull with no occipital ridge, leading a solitary life. It is perhaps due to these circumstances that so many erroneous observations have been made regarding panthers. Out of some fifty killed and measured I find mature males show a variation of six inches or so round about seven

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feet, and females a foot less. Three old males had a head and body length of four feet six inches, four feet three inches and four feet two inches respectively; two had tails two feet nine inches in length, and one two feet six inches. Three old females were, two of them three feet eight inches and one an inch less in length of head and body. These were of average size, and it seems that mature animals do not vary as greatly in this respect as has frequently been represented. They were measured between pegs and not round the curves of the body.

Little appears to be definitely recorded regarding the breeding seasons of the great Felidæ. A panther killed in March had three unborn cubs. I kept for some time a cub that was born in December, and I saw a cub in February that was probably five or six months old, as was another shot in April. There is apparently no regular breeding season. Cubs are generally two or three in number. They are born blind, after a period of gestation probably extending to twelve weeks. The cubs have the woolly texture of fur which is supposed in the tiger to point to an origin of the species in a cold climate.

The habits of panthers are especially interesting, perhaps owing to their frequently living in proximity to the habitations of man. Their conduct is often characterised by extreme boldness and extreme timidity. Though so bold that they have been known to enter a tent, and even a house, they will seldom take their prey in the presence of man when they are aware that they can be seen. Thus a herd of goats watched by a small herd-boy will probably be unmolested, but stragglers will be seized. At hill stations dogs are not infrequently taken when out with their owners, but the thief is generally invisible. In evidence of the boldness of the

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animal it has often been instanced that it has returned to a kill shortly after being fired at. I recollect one returning to the carcass of a nilgai three times in the course of two hours, being fired at on each occasion. But some people are too ready to ascribe almost human powers of reason to animals. It is not likely that the panther is aware that a projectile has been propelled at it, or that it will connect the report of the rifle with an attempt on its life. It merely hears a big and unwonted noise. A friend of mine shot in quick succession three panthers that came to feed on the carcass of a donkey they had killed. Panthers commonly reside in the near vicinity of villages and become used to the presence of human beings, but even where they are not molested they are seldom seen, although they may be heard prowling in the darkness.

The panther, like the tiger, hunts by sight, aided by hearing, and does not possess very strong powers of scent. The sportsman waiting in ambush may sit in a concealed shelter on the ground, when a panther will prowl round only a few feet off without detecting his presence, and he may even smoke undetected in such a situation. This may not appear conclusive in the case of panthers having the habit of prowling round human habitations, as they may have acquired indifference to the smell of man. But the same thing has been observed in forest-dwellers, which prey, not on stray goats and dogs, but on the wild denizens of the jungle. The powers of vision of the panther are not very good. They at once detect movement, but fail to distinguish a motionless object. Whiskers appear to help. I saw a panther, driven out below me in a noisy beat, using his whiskers very freely; they were set and bristling and moving

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backwards and forwards. Panthers seldom look up, but have been known to attack a man in a tree when driven out in a beat.

The panther is not as impatient of thirst as the tiger, and may often be found at a distance from water. I have never known one take to water, and they seem to like wetting their fur as little as does the domestic cat. I have found many on rocky or stony hills where there are sparse bushes and scattered trees, far from water; but they like shade, and in the hot weather will be found in clumps of evergreens, when other trees and bushes have no leaves. They also frequent porcupine holes in the banks of nullahs and ravines.

In the vicinity of villages they prey largely on stray goats, dogs, calves, donkeys and ponies, and a large panther will kill a good-sized cow or bullock. Of wild animals, pigs, nilgai and small deer and antelope furnish most victims; hares and pea-fowl also are caught. Like tigers, they prey on porcupines, and often have quills sticking in their paws or other parts of their bodies. They thus sometimes fall victims to their prey, and have been found dead and pierced by quills. In one instance recorded in *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* a porcupine attacked a dead panther, out of which over five dozen quills were taken. The observer remarked on the deliberate way in which the porcupine had walked round the panther and filled him with quills both before and behind.

The panther almost invariably seizes its prey by the throat, and follows the same rule in attacking human beings. But people mauled in this manner are generally seized by the arm or shoulder, which are no doubt presented to the animal in the effort to protect oneself.

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Nearly all those I have seen mauled have been seized by the arm or shoulder, as I was myself. In these circumstances the animal does not stay and worry one, but makes off after inflicting one or two bites. Those attacked by man-eaters come under a different category, and are usually seized by the throat; an old woman was in one instance dragged by the leg out of the verandah of the house where she was sleeping.

How does the panther attack and kill its prey? We constantly read of the great carnivora "springing" on their prey. In my experience these animals rush up and seize the victim by the throat, at the same time clasping the forequarters with their paws. Having killed its prey, the panther drags it away and devours it at leisure under a tree or in a thicket, or sometimes conceals it in the fork of a tree. It generally begins eating at the pelvis and works up to the chest. But I have known a panther begin eating, like a tiger, at the haunch of a buffalo calf. The kill may sometimes be found covered with branches and leaves to conceal it from vultures. I have seen the remains of a barking-deer deposited in the fork of a tree eight feet from the ground. A full-grown chital stag was found placed in a tree, a half-grown boar twenty feet from the ground, and the body of a boy killed by a man-eater in a similar position.

Panthers are good tree-climbers, but their habits are not as arboreal as those of the jaguar. I shot one which was said by the local inhabitants to prey on the langur monkeys which lived about a neighbouring temple and in the surrounding trees. They said that it used to chase them in the evening. I saw those same monkeys playing leap-frog like a pack of schoolboys, perhaps in celebration of the death of their enemy. This seems to betray

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a common origin or common instincts! The panther's method of hunting was to hold on to a branch with one paw and seize a monkey with the other.

Fights between panthers and hyenas have been recorded, and it is remarkable that the hyena has always been victorious. These have been observed when both animals approached the same kill, and in one instance a panther was killed by a hyena whose cave it had entered. But these animals may be found living amicably in the same cave system or group of rocks. A panther and a porcupine were once observed to approach water to drink, when the porcupine attacked the panther by backing towards it and drove it away.

Man-eating panthers in the Deccan are more numerous than tigers addicted to the same practice. Probably nay panther will take a child where opportunity offers. I have known many such cases. Some of the most terrible man-eaters have been panthers, which have killed men, women and children indiscriminately. The history of man-eaters would furnish material for a whole volume. In one instance an unfortunate boy was seized by a panther, but escaped, and recovered from his wounds, only to be again attacked, killed and devoured by the same monster a year or so later. In the Deccan I have heard of many man-eating panthers; but this subject is of sufficient interest to be dealt with in a separate chapter. I need not here enter into the various methods of hunting panthers or leopards, which afford good sport when no better game is to be had. The methods which I have found successful in the Deccan will be described in the narrative of particular incidents.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Man-Eating Tigers

"When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?"

WILLIAM BLAKE.

THERE is a strange and awful fascination in the history of man-eaters. Readers of Colonel Patterson's account of the man-eating lions of Tsavo will understand the horror of the grim and romantic tragedy that characterises stories of such monsters. Stories of man-eaters in India are no less tragic. In one year, sixteen hundred people were killed by tigers in British India, and this represents about the average annual mortality during many years from this cause. These are generally the victims of man-eaters, for, unless they are man-eaters, tigers will not ordinarily attack human beings. The number of people killed, such as sportsmen and others when hunting tigers, and occasional herdsmen protecting their flocks, is so small as to be insignificant.

In years gone by the mortality must have been much greater, when tigers were more numerous, although it was perhaps not as great as might have been expected from their numbers, for no doubt their natural prey also was more abundant. Whenever a man is carried off near a public road a stick with a piece of coloured cloth is erected as a warning to travellers. Every

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passer-by throws a stone near it, and large heaps of stones thus accumulated were at one time numerous along frequented roads where tigers lurked. In some places it was found necessary to clear the jungle for fifty yards on each side of the road as a protection against their attacks, for these animals will not attack openly, but approach their prey stealthily and under cover at close quarters.

In the last half century man-eaters have not been numerous in the Deccan, perhaps because the plentiful cattle and, in places, the deer and other game furnish a sufficiency of prey. In parts of the country where tigers were numerous, although there was not a great abundance of other game, I found man-eaters had seldom been known, and, as already related, I met with only one in the course of many years. An officer in camp on one occasion shot two man-eaters, one of which took a trooper who was on guard at night, with a fire as a supposed protection. The tigress suddenly came out of the darkness and seized the man by the head, and his corpse was found next morning with one leg eaten off.

There is a generally prevalent impression, which may have dangerous consequences, that predaceous carnivora may be kept off by fires lighted at the camp or bivouac. It has probably arisen owing to the popular idea that such animals will normally attack man; and travellers have therefore assumed that their immunity from such attack in places infested by wild beasts has been due to the fire they have lighted at their camp, the fact being that it is owing to the normal carnivorous animal not being addicted to preying on man.

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Mr R. A. Sterndale has related that when in pursuit of a man-eating leopard his camp was guarded by great fires, and implies that this was a measure of safety; but he then goes on to tell of a man having been seized by the throat by this animal and dragged across the fire made at the entrance of his hut, while his wife caught hold of his legs and exerted her strength against that of the man-eater.

Even so experienced a naturalist as the late W. H. Hudson refers, in his *Naturalist in La Plata*, to "a protection as effectual as the camp-fire the traveller lights in a district abounding with beasts of prey," and he says later on that "the fires which travellers make for their protection actually serve to attract beasts of prey, but the confusion and fear caused by the bright glare makes it safe for the traveller to lie down and sleep in the light." He here shares the common fallacy.

Certainly, except in the case of man-eaters, beasts of prey, unless molested, seldom attack man by day or by night, asleep or awake. In the Deccan, when encamped in country abounding with tigers and leopards, I used to sleep outside, whether in shadow or in moonlight, for the sake of the cool air during the sultry nights of the hot weather. One night a panther came to drink at a trough not far from my bed, and the next night a bear entered the precincts of the camp; and I have also heard a tiger prowling by, his further course marked by the cries of pea-fowl and spotted deer. But I did not have any fire to keep off the wild beasts, nor did I give any thought to the possibility of attack. Fire or light may have an attraction for wild animals, especially as indicating the possible presence of prey,

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in the form of cattle or dogs, and a leopard may be shot by the light of a lantern over a goat picketed as bait.

But the idea that fire will scare off wild beasts which have the will to attack may be dangerous to those who hold it, and I would certainly trust to no such protection in a neighbourhood haunted by a man-eater. An instance of the futility of such supposed protection occurred many years ago when a small vessel anchored near Saugur Island, at the mouth of the Hugli, and six Europeans went ashore in search of coconuts. They wandered inland, darkness came on, and they put up for the night in the ruins of an old temple. A fire was lighted, and it was arranged for two of the party to keep watch in turn. In the first watch a tiger rushed over the fire and seized one of the two. Such was the fury of the attack that the beast, springing off with its victim in its jaws, struck with its head the side of the pagoda, and with its prey rebounded into the fire, rolling over in the embers, but then making good its escape with the victim, who was devoured not far off during the night.

It was unfortunate that the particulars of this incident were unknown to another party of Europeans who, five years later, anchored in a ship off the same island. For they also thought that by lighting a large fire they could keep wild beasts off, as they had always heard that it would. They landed for the purpose of shooting deer, and in the afternoon sat down to eat, having made a large fire, composed of ten or more whole trees. They had just begun their meal when, one of the party wrote: "I heard a roar like thunder, and saw an immense royal tiger spring on the unfortunate Munro, who was sitting

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down. In a moment his head was in the beast's mouth, and it rushed into the jungle with him with as much ease as I could lift a kitten, tearing him through the thick hedges and trees, everything yielding to his monstrous force." Several shots were fired and the tiger dropped Munro, who staggered back and fell, covered with blood. He was mortally wounded, his head being torn to pieces, and he died next day in great agony.

Stories of African travel also indicate that fire will not keep off man-eating lions, and one reads of such animals being driven off by a blow with a brand snatched from the burning. Yet Colonel Patterson says in his *Man-eaters of Tsavo* that on one occasion he "felt fairly safe, as one of my men carried a bright lamp close behind me." But he tells of many attacks on camps, and says that "when the camp was not being attacked by man-eating lions it was visited by leopards, hyenas, wild dogs, wild cats and other inhabitants of the jungle around us." It does not appear whether fires were burning about the camps or not; but certainly travellers and sportsmen visiting neighbourhoods where there are man-eaters would do well not to trust to the protection of fires, or they may be literally rudely awakened from their supposititious safety.

It is not often that Europeans are devoured, but I recollect a Roman Catholic priest being killed and eaten by a tiger; and some forty years ago, when two forest officers were hunting the Chakrata man-eater, one of them was seized by the beast, but his life was saved by the presence of mind and prompt action of his companion, although he suffered severe injuries. An instance is recorded of a planter being taken by the

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hand in the jaws of a tiger and led out of the verandah of his house; but he escaped from this terrifying experience without other injury. I have never heard of a European being taken by a man-eating leopard. This might partly be accounted for by the fact that these animals seldom attack adults, their victims being generally children, who, in the case of Europeans, are not commonly exposed to such dangers.

Man-eaters even have their place in history. In the Mahratta war of 1817 wild beasts took their toll of the advancing army of the Deccan under Sir Thomas Hislop; and, after the dispersal of the Pindaris in that war, Chithu, the famous leader of these bands of marauders, wandered off alone in the jungles near Asirgarh, on the banks of the Tapti river, and was killed and devoured by a man-eating tiger, the remains being recognised by the discovery of the head of the ill-fated chieftain.

A sportsman was walking in the jungle, followed by his gun-bearer, when the latter was seized and carried off by a tiger. He fired and wounded the animal, which dropped its prey and retreated into the jungle; but the man was dead, having his chest crushed in. The tiger was followed up and killed. The same sportsman shot another man-eating tiger. He had just crossed a nullah on horseback when a shout from his followers made him turn round, and he saw a tiger in the midst of them with the dog-boy in his jaws; it sprang with its prey into the jungle. One of the men fired a gun, and the dog-boy staggered back in a few moments and fell dead with his throat torn open. The tiger, a noted man-eater, which had accounted for many victims, was at once followed up and killed.

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The Central Provinces have always borne a bad reputation for man-eaters, both tigers and leopards. One tiger destroyed half the population of some villages on the Pench river, near Kampti. It was said to enter a village in the daytime and go from one house to another in search of victims, and break all the earthenware pots if it found no human prey! But there are always strange jungle stories prevalent about wild animals. Sometimes monsters have so terrorised a whole district that the inhabitants have barricaded themselves in their houses, and have been afraid to venture forth except in large bodies protected by armed men and beating drums and shouting on their way.

In some cases there have been remarkable attempts to save the victims of man-eaters. Two men were driving loaded bullocks when a tiger seized the man in rear, and a herdsman, who was watching buffaloes grazing, ran up and cut the tiger with his sword, whereupon it turned on him and killed him; the buffaloes then charged and killed the tiger; the man first seized recovered. In another case an elderly man and his wife were carrying home bundles of wood, the woman, as usual, tramping behind, when the man, hearing a peculiar noise, turned round and saw a tiger making off with his wife in its jaws. He ran up and struck the tiger with his axe, causing the beast to drop the woman, who afterwards recovered. In another instance an old Muhammadan priest was travelling on horseback, with his son walking by his side, when they heard a tiger roaring. The son asked the father to hurry, but the old man continued at a slow pace. Suddenly the tiger charged and knocked him off his horse, and was carrying him off when the son attacked the beast with his sword. The tiger dropped

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the father and seized the son, who was never heard of again. The father died of his wounds.

Some years ago an Indian surveyor was at work in the jungle with his subordinate. The surveyor was seated at a table and the other man was sitting on the ground close by, when a tiger rushed out of the forest and carried off the subordinate. Without hesitation the brave surveyor seized his brass sighting ruler, weighing about two pounds, ran after the tiger and, catching it up, beat it over the head until it dropped its victim and made off. He was, unfortunately, too late to save the man's life. Cases have been known of small boys driving tigers away from their cattle by beating the beasts over the head with a long staff.

Within the last sixty years, tigers were not uncommon near Bombay, and some of these were man-eaters. The last man-eater was a tigress with three cubs, which were killed in 1895. The tigress had killed five people, one of whom, a woman, was killed in the presence of a witness, who said that the beast ran after the woman and caught her. The neck was twisted, the throat torn open, and there were claw-marks on the back. Man-eaters are liable to recur in particular districts, probably owing to the education of the cubs by their mothers, for these monsters are more often females than males. In some cases the beginning of these evil propensities may be due to accident. A herdsman may be killed while protecting cattle, but in such circumstances the corpse is not usually devoured. Or a tigress with young may have difficulty in providing for them and may discover that human beings are an easy prey. In the last-mentioned instance the first two victims were not eaten.

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It is related that Buddha, in one of his incarnations, gave his life for a tigress with cubs thus situated, and how the beast, "bloody with ravin," hurled to the earth her willing victim, and "had her feast of him with all the crooked daggers of her claws rending his flesh, and all her yellow fangs bathed in his blood." The taste for human flesh thus acquired is transmitted by example to the offspring. A proportion of man-eaters have suffered from lameness or other disablement, and so find it difficult to kill game. The idea that such beasts are mangy, as if from feeding on human flesh, has probably arisen from one or two instances of old and decrepit man-eaters, perhaps driven to human flesh by their inability to hunt any longer. It has also been suggested that tigers may have acquired this habit from preying on dead or dying victims of famine, whose skulls I have frequently found in the jungle.

I myself have been followed unawares for some distance by a large tiger, as shown by his tracks, which I observed on the return journey; but this was, fortunately, not a man-eater, and probably his desire was only to see me off the premises, where he had prepared his dinner by killing a buffalo. I shot him next day.

Colonel Ferris related in *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* for 1898 a curious superstition with regard to man-eating tigers. A tigress with a cub had taken to man-eating in the Sawantwari State. The villagers were anxious to have the cub killed, as it would inherit the propensity, while they said that the tigress would then cease killing them, having no cub to kill for. Also, said they, "the man-eating mark," a distinct cross on the left side of the body, would be found. Colonel Ferris shot the cub, and as the headman

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came up he said: "Now we will see if the man-eater's mark is there." Sure enough the mark was distinctly visible in the form of a cross. Colonel Ferris says that he afterwards shot the tigress, but he does not say whether she also was branded. The skin of my man-eater has no cross on one side or the other!

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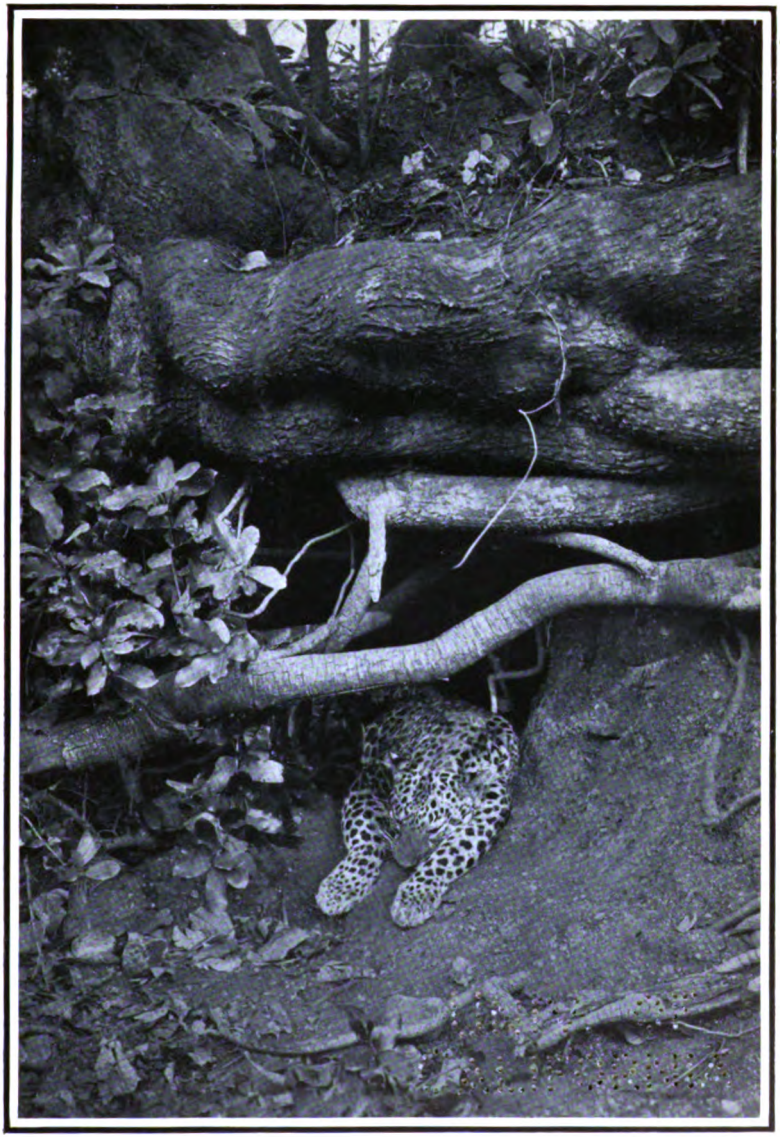

THE LEOPARD'S DEN

The leopard, a nocturnal animal, is seldom seen in daylight, for he hides "deep sleeping from the face of day" in some secluded den or thicket;

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Various Man-Eaters

"With all the crooked daggers of her claws
Rending his flesh, and all her yellow fangs
Bathed in his blood."

EDWIN ARNOLD.

THE leopard has, on occasion, proved an even more terrible enemy than the tiger. It is bolder and yet more cunning. It has less fear of the proximity of human beings, for it lurks in the neighbourhood of the dwellings of man, where it finds its ordinary prey, and thus gains a certain familiarity and fearlessness, while it inhabits sparse and limited jungles where no tiger would dwell. Man-eating leopards are perhaps even more frequent than tigers with the same propensities. While I have shot only one confirmed man-eating tiger I have known numbers of cases where leopards have carried off and devoured human beings. It is probable that, in favourable circumstances, almost any leopard will take a small child; but opportunities for this fortunately seldom occur, except to the confirmed man-eater, who hunts for human prey.

A monster of this species infesting the jungles of the Seoni District of the Central Provinces killed nearly a hundred people in one year, and over two hundred in the course of three years. It seemed to kill for killing's sake, for it only lapped the blood of its victims, and had been known to destroy three in a night. It would take the sleeper from his cot and the watcher from the platform

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on which he spent the night to scare wild animals from his crops. The whole country was demoralised. The dread inspired by this monster was partly due to superstition, which invested it with supernatural attributes, the creature being accounted a man who had taken on the form of a leopard, as in the werewolf superstitions of Eastern Europe. When driven off from one end of a village the man-eater would hurry round to the other end and secure a victim in the confusion. This beast was shot by a native policeman.

Another fearful man-eating leopard committed ravages on the left bank of the Wardha river, near the village of Nachingaon, on the road from Nagpur to Berar. This animal was in the habit of swarming up the poles which supported the platforms on which the night-watchmen sat to scare the pig and antelope from the crops. The watchman might be asleep when the monster silently climbed to the platform and pulled him from his perch. This man-eater was caught in a box-trap baited with a goat, and so destroyed. Usually man-eating leopards kill only at night, when their victims are asleep, but one that infested the country south of Nagpur used to rush into the midst of people, generally women and children drawing water from the village well or playing in the gardens, and seize a victim by the throat. When the company had fled, and men with clubs and spears appeared on the scene, nothing remained but a blood-stained corpse, or, if the victim was a child, a little blood spilt on the scene of the tragedy.

Mr Davies, of the Berar Commission, told me how he killed a man-eating leopard near Basim. This animal was fortunately destroyed before it had done much damage, for it had attacked only three or four people.

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The first victim was a baby taken from a hut, the door of which had been left open. Then it attacked an elderly woman, who escaped with her life. In February 1891 a party of Brinjaras bivouacked in the open. Shortly after midnight a woman felt the covering over her twelve-year-old son roughly dragged away and found that the boy was gone. She raised the alarm, but it was dark; there were no lights and nothing could be done. Through the long and agonising night the poor mother awaited the dawn with dread, when her worst fears were confirmed by the discovery of drops of blood and the trail of the drag. The skull of the boy, stripped of flesh, was found, and farther on, in a dark ravine, the headless corpse was seen in the fork of a mohwa-tree, the legs crossed, the arms stiffly stretched out. Mr Davies beat out and shot the culprit, which proved to be a female leopard in milk; it had taken to man-eating to supply its young with food after killing all the dogs in the neighbouring villages.

When in camp, tiger-shooting, at Chandur I heard of a man-eating leopard which, a year or two before, had taken a number of victims at night from surrounding villages. Among these was a man who had been lying asleep on his cot, his wife on another cot by his side, in an open space enclosed by a thorn fence in front of his hut in the middle of the village. The leopard seized him by the throat and killed him as he lay, and was then driven off by the shouts of the villagers. It next killed a boy of seven, passing a man who was sleeping on the same cot in order to get at its prey. The boy was carried off and devoured. Then the monster took a sixteen-year-old girl who was sleeping with a number of others on the ground close to the road, to which she was nearest. She

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was seized by the throat and dragged through a gap in the hedge.

On being followed, the leopard dropped the body, but picked it up again. A pool of blood lay where it was dropped. The pursuers soon after came upon the body, which the leopard had again dropped, and as they looked the blood poured from a hole in the neck and made a large pool on the ground; the jugular vein was severed, but, except for the two pools, there was no blood on the tracks, the wounds being closed by the animal's teeth and jaws. This leopard had killed twenty-six people. A few days later it was caught in a pitfall near the entrance to a village and was shot by a policeman.

It is remarkable that these animals do not more frequently take to man-eating, for they are often found living close to villages, especially in Berar, where I killed over twenty in such localities. Only one of these was a regular man-eater, which had carried off many children in a number of villages which were taken in a nightly round. It had also begun to attack adults. The children were taken by night from the precincts of the villages; the adults were attacked in the fields in the dusk of the evening. Different accounts of the assailant were given, which corresponded very closely with those of attacks by a mysterious wild beast in Orel Government when I was in Russia in 1893. The same kind of superstition was prevalent in both cases. Some said the animal was black and had no tail—an instance of the werwolf superstition—others declared that it was a tiger; but I thought it more probably a wolf, for the country was open and cultivated.

I rode out to the place one day in May, my men having preceded me to collect information as to the beast's

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movements. The night before a little girl had been taken from the threshold of a hut and devoured in a ravine hard by. Nothing remained but a string of bloodstained beads, a tress of black hair and a tiny hand. The ground, burnt brick-red by the heat of the sun, was too hard to show any trace of the monster's pads. To search amid the intricacies of the river bank was a hopeless task. The sun was already sinking. A wind like a breath from Hades blew in gusts across the plain, raising here and there the " dust devils," which were carried along with a whirl of dancing leaves until they subsided with the dying of the breeze.

At dusk my bed was placed in the open under the projecting roof of a hut, to which there was a clear approach from the open country and the river-bed. My loaded rifle lay ready to hand. At a short distance from the head of the bed two goats were tethered to serve as bait. My men and all the villagers were confined to the huts.

Night watches sphinx-like, starred with eyes; can other eyes not see? None save those burning orbs which gleam like glow-worms in the gloom. The moon would rise at midnight, and until then it was not possible to see anything except silhouettes against the sky. The goats were swallowed up in the blackness of night. There was no sound except the chirrup of crickets and the croaking of bull-frogs in an adjacent pool. I went to sleep. I awoke suddenly, with every sense alert and a feeling so often experienced of the proximity of a beast of prey. The light of the moon, which was still hidden behind the rim of the earth, revealed the goats, which tugged at their tethers and stamped with their forefeet as they gazed into the darkness towards the bank of the ravine.

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Then a shape was outlined for a moment against the starlit sky and was swallowed up in the darkness that lay in a hollow between the horizon and the goats. The animals pulled at their ropes, but uttered now no sound. Then the moon rose above the rim of the earth and the light flowed across the open space in front of me, revealing a small leopard creeping towards me. I got into position to shoot, but the monster saw me and fled toward the ravine, and was hidden from view by the flash of my rifle. When the smoke cleared I could see nothing. Men hurried up with lanterns; the hard ground showed no tracks. When morning came we searched in vain: the beast had gone. But a few days afterwards a leopard with a broken leg and in an exhausted condition was done to death by the villagers a mile or two off; and there were no more tragedies.

Next to tigers and leopards the most destructive man-eaters in India are wolves, but they are much reduced in numbers. Mr Dunbar Brander, in his excellent book, *Wild Animals in Central India*, says he saw only three in the Central Provinces, where they were numerous in former times. I recollect over a hundred people being killed by one pack in the Hoshangabad District less than forty years ago, and I have seen many wolves—and shot some—in Berar. Wolves have inspired man with dread since the days of the Romans, who believed that if a wolf saw a man before the man saw the wolf, the man would be suddenly struck dumb and unable to call for help. They were known as man-eaters long ago. Chaucer describes the statue of Armipotent in *The Temple of Mars*:

> "A wolf there lay before him at his feete,
> With eyen red, and of a man he eat."

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Wolves, both in Europe and in India, will, on occasion, attack human beings. In Europe such attacks are generally carried out by packs, which assemble in rigorous winters. But ordinarily the wolf is not dangerous to human life. I have driven a hundred miles in the depth of winter, and by night, through forests in White Russia infested by wolves, in a troika with tinkling bells; the driver said he had never heard of wolves attacking people.

In India the wolf, which is a smaller and lighter animal than the European wolf, commonly carries off children, and sometimes attacks adults. At Ellichpur a child was brought to hospital with its throat torn open by one of these animals, and at Jalna a small pack killed two or three women. They are generally found single or in pairs, but a pack of fourteen or more was once seen on the racecourse at Jalna. In the Central Provinces they were at one time numerous and destructive. Captain Forsyth killed two wolves preying on children at a small village. They carried off a child every few days from the centre of the village in broad daylight. The villagers were too apathetic to attempt their destruction, although their den was close by. The plan of attack was simple. One wolf hid in the bushes at the foot of the slope on which the village was situated, while the other went round to the top, watched its opportunity, and raced down through the street, picking up a child on the way and making off with it into the neighbouring jungle. If it was driven off the other wolf would often take another child in the confusion; so the villagers gave up pursuing the thief, thinking it better to lose one child than two, as the first one would be injured beyond recovery.

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It is related in Forbes' *Oriental Memoirs* that three wolves attacked a sentry on guard at Lucknow; he killed two, but was himself killed by the third. A tribe of natives in Oudh used to make a living by recovering the gold and silver ornaments from dens to which the wolves had carried their victims and where they devoured them.

After tigers, leopards and wolves, the most destructive man-eaters are the crocodiles, found in many of the rivers and lakes. No statistics are available as to the number of their victims; it may be doubted whether these are numerous. The only evidence I have met with of man-eating crocodiles—and I have shot and cut open many of these reptiles—was a silver bracelet and a coin which I found in one of them. There are plenty in the Godavery, the Pein Gunga, and other rivers of the Deccan. These creatures might acquire a taste for human flesh from the corpses floating down the rivers, or pulled from the burning ghats and devoured. On the Mahi river I have seen both crocodiles and large turtles rush out of the water and tear to pieces the remains of a corpse on a funeral pyre. They bore off legs and arms, regardless of the heat of the embers, which caused the skin on the backs of the turtles to curl and frizzle.

I do not think crocodiles, any more than sharks, will ordinarily attack man, and the man-eater appears to be abnormal, as in the case of other animals. In olden days crocodiles in the moat round the fort at Vellore were protected, perhaps because it was thought they would prevent adventurous British soldiers from breaking out of barracks and swimming across. But the soldiers learned that the reptiles sank to the bottom of the moat

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THE PYTHON

This great serpent preys on deer and other animals, which it seizes and kills by constriction in its folds. One has been known to crush to death a native boy. It attains a length of over twenty feet.

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at gun-fire. So they would swim across on the sound of the evening gun, returning when the gun was again fired at dawn. On one occasion a sergeant of the Scottish Brigade, for a small wager, entered the water, and was several times drawn under, but escaped with some severe wounds.

In India I have heard of only one case of a hyena attacking a human being. This occurred in the Shevaroy Hills, when a woman who was drawing water from a stream near her village was seized by a hyena, which rushed out of the jungle and tried to drag her away; but she took it by the ears and pulled it towards the village. Hearing her cries, the villagers ran out and attacked and killed it with clubs and knives, but too late to save the woman, who died from her injuries. The hyena was a female, and can scarcely be called a man-eater; she probably had cubs close by.

The Indian python, which grows to a length of some twenty feet, is generally not dangerous to human life. I have often seen the tracks of immense pythons where they have passed across dusty jungle paths, but have not seen one over fourteen feet long. But many years ago two boys wandering in the jungle came upon an immense python, and went to look at it, not seeing what it was, as it was half hidden in the undergrowth. The serpent seized one of them and the other boy alarmed the village. When the people came up they at first took the reptile to be a leopard, but on going closer saw the boy in the folds of an immense snake. Attacking the serpent with bill-hooks they released the boy and killed his assailant, which was over sixteen feet long. But the boy had been crushed to death, and nearly every bone in his body was broken.

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The wild dog looks aggressive on occasion, but I believe has never been known to attack human beings. But at Jullundur long ago a boy was killed and torn to pieces by a pack of pariah dogs which had been roused by a stone thrown at one of their number.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Buldana Plateau

"With what delight he once more pitched his camp in the living out-of-doors."—R. L. STEVENSON.

ABOUT a dozen miles north of Jalna the old Nagpur road ascends to the wide plateau of East Berar, a highly cultivated area, comprising, however, hilly and jungle tracts where game abounds. Herds of antelope and large numbers of gazelle are to be met with in all suitable localities; nilgai are numerous; a few spotted deer may be seen; pea-fowl, partridges, sand-grouse and quail are generally abundant; hares start from many bushes, and wildfowl come in the cold season to alight and feed wherever there is water. The nilgai, Indian antelope and, not infrequently, pigs furnish natural prey for leopards and wolves; and the district is perhaps one of the last localities where the hunting leopard, commonly known as the cheetah, is still to be found, while the numerous villages dotted over the country possess herds of goats which furnish victims to the leopards.

Where this tableland abuts upon the plain, the waters of many rainy seasons have cut deeply into its sides, forming well-wooded ravines and stony watercourses that wind away over the grassy plain to the cultivation beyond. At the head of one of these ravines stands a Hindu temple, below which the ground breaks abruptly with rocky and precipitous descent to the ravine, where the stony watercourse, dry during the hot season, winds

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its tortuous way between high banks, through dense bushes and long grass, whilst many a shady mohwa and other tree stands upon its margin.

In a basaltic basin below, worn in the solid rock by ages of dripping water, a small and solitary pool generally remains during the hot weather, forming a centre of attraction for the various animals which inhabit the surrounding jungles. To this pool the pea-fowl resorted morning and evening, and hither the leopard came to quench his thirst after his midnight feast. To this spot I tracked him along the dusty path from the village, where he killed and devoured a dog one night, and next night took a goat from the hillside below my tent. His pugs were plainly outlined in the dust, over the hoof-marks of the cattle which had passed the evening before on their homeward journey from pasture. But quail and partridges had run over the spoor, thus proving that the leopard had passed by before break of day. He had crossed the open space near the temple and descended to the cool thickets that lay below.

I stood on a rock at the head of the nullah and gazed down its length and breadth, arranging in my mind the plan for a beat. A great grey boar was rooting about in an open glade. A peacock was moving in the bushes. A single vulture circled in the air overhead, expectant of a coming feast. Far away in the plain below, a blue haze marked the position of a village, and a moving cloud of dust indicated the track of a herd of cattle on their way to pasture. The jungle was very thick with tangled green and red and yellow bush, forming deep thickets amid the long dry grass. The place would be difficult to beat.

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About thirty beaters were collected, and I stood on a small eminence some distance down the centre of the ravine. The beat began after midday. A bevy of peafowl were disturbed, and some flew and some ran down the nullah. The old boar broke away over the hillside. After a time the clamour of the beaters ceased, and a man shouted across the ravine that the leopard had gone into a large patch of bush and refused to move.

Leaving my position, I went higher up the ravine and posted myself on the hillside, where a view could be obtained of an open space between the thicket where the leopard was and the next clump of bushes. A few trustworthy men were placed on the far side of the patch and look-out men on the hill-top to watch the beast should he break away. At a given signal a shower of stones and yells were hurled at the lurking creature. After a short time he dashed out, roaring loudly, and tore across the narrow space in front of me like a streak of yellow light, staggering to my shot, but recovering himself and going on as if unharmed.

One of the look-out men declared that the leopard had gone right down the nullah, but an inspection did not reveal any tracks in that direction. But I was by no means sure that my bullet had reached the mark, especially as no blood was to be seen. A beast struck by a bullet from a ·500 Express rifle generally leaves a well-marked blood-track. However, I followed for some distance through grass and bush the course the leopard had taken, but not even on the grass that had been swept aside by his body was a trace of blood to be found. Shortly afterwards, while we were resting, a man who had been sent for water to the well near the temple declared that he had heard the beast panting in a thicket

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some fifty yards from the place where I had fired at it. I went to the spot with rifle ready and peered into the bushes. No spotted skin could be seen, and no sound heard. If the beast was there it was surely now dead or unwounded, for I had passed close to the place when following the tracks. So I put a few men on the far side, who advanced, throwing stones, while I stood behind a bush lower down, on the chance of the leopard breaking cover.

Suddenly one of my men called out that he smelt the animal, and before I could warn them to go back the remark was followed by an angry roar and a succession of yells and screams. I ran to the spot whence the uproar came, and found that the beast had charged out and knocked over two men, who escaped unhurt, and seized another by the shoulder. His shoulder and upper arm were terribly lacerated, and blood was pouring from the wounds. The wounded man's injuries had to be attended to, and as this episode had occupied some hours, by the time this had been done the sun was already waning, and to attempt to drive out the animal was out of the question, as I could not expose the beaters to an infuriated beast.

The thicket was so dense that it would not be possible to use the rifle if I had forced my way into it, so I had reluctantly to leave the beast for the present, while the wounded man was dispatched to Jalna in a pony-cart. He made a good recovery, and I saw him some years later, when he was employed as a policeman, and seemed to be proud of his scars. I had to return to Jalna, but rode out the fourteen miles and was on the spot with a herd of buffaloes next morning at nine o'clock. I had never before tried to recover wounded animals with

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buffaloes, and they did not prove to be of any use on this occasion. The owners of the herd declared that they would go in like a pack of hounds and find the leopard, dead or alive. They went right through the bushes, and moved about for an hour without any result.

Suddenly I saw a speck of dry blood on a blade of grass and another no larger than a pea on a stone farther on; lower down a strong putrid odour assailed my nostrils, and I soon found the leopard lying on his back with his legs in the air and already very high. He was a very large animal, shot through the stomach, and the intestines were protruding through the wound. He had probably died soon after the attack on my men. I have related this episode at length, as it furnishes a very typical instance of the hunting of one of these animals.

Eleven years later I passed through Jalna, now an abandoned cantonment, on my way to this same place and the jungles beyond. My first camp was pitched six miles out, beside a pleasant stream, where tall palms grew upon the banks and mango-trees afforded a grateful shade from the heat of the April sun. A goat had been killed by a leopard during the night, and an ambush was constructed close by from which I might watch for its return in the evening, for I did not wish to waste time at this camp. There were tracks of two leopards, a large and a small one.

There has been much questioning by naturalists and others as to whether the Indian gazelle, the chikara, ever drinks. If the sceptics had been in my camp this day they would have seen these animals coming down in numbers from the hills to drink at midday. In the

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evening, when there was bright moonlight, I waited over the remains of the goat from seven to nine o'clock, but nothing came.

A ride of eight miles brought me to Saorgaon, where I had encamped when the leopard episode above described took place eleven years before. I took a number of men and beat the same ravine. A few days before a pony had been killed there. The leopard also had killed an unfortunate woman, who was cutting grass in the jungle when the beast seized her. She was not eaten. The beat was empty except for hares, pea-fowl and partridges. I noticed a tree which showed marks of the leopard's claws; he had been sharpening and cleaning them on the trunk. After the beat a Brinjara said he had seen the animal crossing the hill towards a big nullah about a mile distant. We followed, and on the way came to a small thinly wooded nullah, which seemed a likely spot. I took post on the ridge overlooking both ravines, and put the men in to drive towards me.

The beat had not begun before a fine leopard trotted out past me about thirty yards off, and rolled over with a shot in the shoulder; as it was struggling to get up I gave it another, which was no doubt unnecessary. But it is well to be on the safe side with these dangerous beasts, and having had one mauling I did not want any more. It was close to this spot that some years before the surgeon of my regiment was badly wounded by a leopard. He had fired at and, as he thought, missed it. Afterwards he was walking along the ridge when the beast rushed out and seized a sepoy who was with him. The leopard left the sepoy, after inflicting a severe biting, on being fired at, but the bullet unfortunately

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not only passed through the leopard, but through the man's leg, smashing his thigh. The leopard then turned on the doctor, and bit and clawed his shoulder severely. There was then a pretty mess to clear up, but both the sufferers recovered in course of time.

The question as to whether a leopard or a tiger is the more dangerous has often been discussed. A tiger will kill outright, being the more powerful animal, immensely heavy and possessing gigantic strength. It can bite a man right through the body or take the top of his head off like an egg-shell. But the leopard is more difficult to see and to locate; it will lurk in cover that would seem scarcely enough to hide a hare, and I have found it more tenacious of life than the tiger. Except for man-eaters, I have never heard of a leopard killing a man on the spot. Death generally takes place later from blood-poisoning, as it does in the case of those wounded by the tiger if they are not killed on the spot. Nothing is more poisonous than putrid animal matter, as some wild tribes have discovered, and use it for poisoning their arrow-heads. It would be interesting to collect statistics of sportsmen who have been killed or injured by leopards and by tigers. I can call to mind a greater number who have been seized by the smaller animal. I have seen only two men mauled by a tiger, but have been present at the seizing of five by leopards.

The rosettes on this leopard's skin had, many of them, a central spot like those of the jaguar, which differentiates it from others I have shot. I stayed here another day and shot some antelope and gazelle to supply my camp and beaters with meat. That night a leopard killed a goat picketed at the head of a ravine, near the place where the first one was shot. The rope was broken

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and the goat had been picked up and carried off bodily. We beat two nullahs in the neighbourhood without success, and would probably have driven this animal out in the course of the day, but had to get on to my next camping-ground, which was ten miles off.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Leopards of Jotinga

"A leopard shall watch over their cities."—JEREMIAH v. 6.

MY tents were pitched at Sindkher, where I had often camped in years gone by, near some fine Hindu temples. The place had once been a large town with a crenellated wall and an artificial lake or tank, in the stone-built dam of which were some underground chambers. Here there was only small game, and we moved on next day fourteen miles, shooting a brace of black buck *en route*. We also beat a nullah, out of which came two fine peacocks with resplendent tails, but they were too cunning for me. At the adjacent village a polite Punjabi police inspector brought me a refreshing draught of milk. Then I rode on to the little wayside bungalow, where the caretaker was a pensioned bugler of my regiment.

An emissary had been sent ahead to Mulkapur to tell my old friend, the Mullah or Muhammadan priest, of my expected arrival, and when we reached the camping-ground under the mango-trees all was ready. The Brinjaras of Jotinga were waiting for me, and had brought some rare and refreshing fruit in the shape of the finest melons and custard-apples that I have ever seen. But we missed Baksi Naik of Jotinga. He had been killed by a leopard. He was a fine sportsman, who had been in the habit of following not only pig but leopards with dog and spear. On the last occasion

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he brought a leopard to bay and thrust at it with his spear, but he failed to kill, and the animal seized him and inflicted fatal wounds. But the remainder of the old gang were there, as keen as ever on the chase. On the evening of my arrival they assembled at the village tavern, where the old Mullah, the organiser of sport, went to gather information as to the doings of leopards. There, too, came Kasi Baba Kumbi, as good a sportsman as he was cultivator. I had given them the value of a dozen bottles of country liquor, and under the influence of the flowing bowl much news was obtained and a good deal of wild talk indulged in; it is scarcely necessary to say that the Mullah did not partake of the forbidden wine, he being an orthodox Musalman.

Bhima Naik told of the leopard which was addicted to hunting monkeys and would touch no other prey. The Mullah scoffed at the idea. "How," he said, "is the leopard going to swing from branch to branch to catch the black-faced ones?" But the Naik of Jotinga had his answer ready. "Come and watch when the moon is full, and you will see," he replied. "The leopard has only to walk under the tree where the shadows of the roosting bandar-log are reflected on the ground. He chooses a shadow and pounces upon it, and the foolish owner falls to the earth and is seized at once by the prowler of the night. Thus it is that the leopard, wiser than the human being, grasps at the shadow and seizes the substance." Mahadu Naik, belonging to a rival *tanda*, related that there was a leopard as big as a tiger which nightly visited his village. "And where did you ever see a tiger?" asked Bhima; for there were no tiger jungles within a hundred miles of the place. "I saw

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the tiger which the sahib shot after it had paid him a visit to his house in Jalna," answered Mahadu. "True, indeed," said the Mullah; "I myself saw it in this very jungle before it went on to Jalna. It came to drink one moonlight night when I was watching over a pool in the jungle for blue bull; it was in the famine year, and my heart turned to water, for it was bigger than the biggest bull, and I was afraid to shoot at it." "And I skinned it for the sahib," boasted Lachman, the taxidermist; "it killed my friend at Pipalgaon before the sahib shot it." All of which was quite true. It is noticeable that in the country, and among primitive peoples, time is measured not by dates but by events. For long after a famine, which so affects the people, the event forms a time-mark and a starting-point.

The Mullah told me of a leopard which had killed two antelopes close by; he thought at first it might be a cheetah, but this animal devours its prey on the spot where killed, whereas the leopard had dragged the antelopes away into cover. My method of hunting leopards was to select a likely line of country and start out in the morning with thirty or forty beaters. We would beat every promising piece of jungle, working our way from cover to cover across the hills, looking for tracks, and trying to get information in the hamlets which were scattered about the country. In this way the game can generally be found in the course of the day, and there is always the chance of a shot at an antelope or gazelle, while, having horse and spear, one may get a run after a boar. I was up betimes next morning, and wished that the monkey-hunter would visit the mango-tree under which my tents were pitched, for there a parliament of langurs had assembled, and

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were discharging unsavoury remarks towards my camp. I called them the "Labour Party," by reason of their idleness and irresponsible chatter.

We started for Jotinga with the Mullah and his men and the Brinjaras, led by Bhima Naik, brother of the late Baksi. Jotinga is a small hamlet inhabited entirely by Brinjaras. These nomadic people have in some places settled down, their former occupation of carriers having been largely reduced owing to the spread of other means of transport. The hamlet was situated near jungles close to a range of low hills. At the foot of a hill were tracks of a leopard about some porcupine holes. It was a cool and cloudy day; the animal would probably be lying out in the jungle, so I took up a position near the holes and sent the beaters through a patch of bush-jungle a hundred yards off. A leopard broke and made for the holes, and I knocked it over with the first shot, and finished it off with another as it dragged itself towards the dens. This was a male about six and a half feet long. No doubt there was another in the holes, for I could smell it, and there were some hard-backed flies of the kind which infest wild creatures. Antelope were numerous, and I shot a black buck and a gazelle. At one village no information could be got out of the inhabitants, who were stupid and reticent, except a small boy, who said there was a leopard about in the neighbourhood. The Mullah said if their own fathers were killed and eaten they would still give no information! I was out twelve hours this day and most other days when a hunt of this kind took place.

For two days nothing was seen, but on 10th April we went to look up the leopard which Mahadu said was in the habit of visiting his village, about five miles off.

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Sure enough, there were the fresh tracks near a well in the middle of a street, a mile or two from the foot of some likely-looking hills. We beat several good covers without result, and then came to a wide nullah with some scattered bushes, when one of my men came and said he had seen a leopard lying asleep in the shade of a bush. I looked at the place but could see nothing, nor did a beat reveal the presence of the beast we were in search of. Probably the man was deceived by the appearance of the sunlight chequered through the bush, and having been twice mauled by these animals he was prone to see one in every bush. At length we turned the leopard out of a bush-filled depression on the hillside. He looked as big as a tigress, and appeared almost black in the shadows. He trotted towards the place where I sat on a rock fifty yards off, and rolled over with a bullet in the back from the old ·500 Express, and another in the shoulder finished him. This was a very big and heavy old male, seven feet eight inches long, having a bright, smooth coat, a long head and a well-pronounced occipital ridge. We went on and beat some other places, and I wounded a blue bull, which we recovered when beating an extensive jungle. Then we met a band of Brinjaras from another village, who said they had seen a leopard enter a nullah that morning. On the way to the place a fine buck gazelle came running straight towards me, and I jumped off my horse and shot it at a distance of thirty yards. No leopard came out in the beat, and we got back to camp after dark. The Subadar-Major made a wonderful shot with his Mauser rifle, breaking all three legs of a black buck with one bullet; the animal had an old bullet-wound in the neck.

Next morning we beat along the hills until we came to

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a deep valley filled with dense jungle at its head. The beaters entered the nullah, and soon a leopard with a large cub charged them with fierce roars. They had killed a cow in the cover and refused to be driven out, charging the men each time they approached, but taking care to keep out of sight. I was posted a considerable distance down the nullah, and now moved up nearer to the kill, while the Subadar-Major led on the beaters, firing several shot cartridges into the cover. At last the big one broke and passed rapidly along the nullah forty yards off. I saw her only for a moment and missed with both barrels. The cub was seen in the beat, but did not come my way. This spot was an unlucky one, where I had missed a running shot at a leopard seven years before. I have not previously found these beasts so fierce when unhurt, but they were unwilling to leave their prey and the cool jungle.

We went next day to beat up the two leopards, but it was not until four o'clock in the afternoon that they got up in a nullah and made off round the hill below, going fast, tails in air. They passed unseen three hundred yards below me. In the last beat three gazelles and a number of fine peacocks came out and stood close to me, but the pea-fowl, as ever, were the quickest to detect the presence of danger. It is the one denizen of the jungle from which it is difficult to conceal oneself. A spotted stag, of which there were very few in this part of the country, also was seen.

This day we dislodged the "Labour Party" from the mango-trees above my tents by very unparliamentary methods. I had been obliged to move my bed out into the open field, so as to escape the attentions of this unsavoury assemblage, who were at length driven forth

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MONKEYS

The grey, black-faced langur monkey, whose antics are described on several occasions. This conclave was drawn from life. They are busily occupied in doing nothing, as is the custom of these animals. (From a sketch by the Author.)

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with showers of stones. I had intended to give the men a rest after strenuous work, but heard that four goats had been killed out of a flock five or six miles off, so rode across to the place, taking thirty beaters. On arrival at the scene of action we found that five goats had been killed at midday two days before; only one had been dragged off, and there was no sign of the thief. We beat all the surrounding jungle, but found nothing. The Mullah told me how one of the men with us got mauled by a wounded leopard. The Mullah fired at it at night and broke a leg; they followed it up next day, and he saw it and fired a shot, breaking another leg. This man persisted in going into cover after it, saying it was dead, and he was scragged at once.

We were taking a rest next day when a Brinjara arrived at two o'clock with news that his people had marked down a leopard in a nullah about two miles off. I set out with a few beaters. The Brinjaras were watching on a hill-top overlooking the nullah, in which they said they could see the animal lying under a small green tree about eighty yards off; but I could not make it out, even with the aid of binoculars. The Brinjaras would persist in talking aloud. I remonstrated with them, saying they would send it off; but the Naik said that the animal was alert and would lie still as long as they continued talking, but that if they were silent it would make off, thinking they had gone. A dog also was barking persistently, but this did not disturb the leopard, which the Brinjaras had followed a long distance, keeping it in sight the whole time. The beaters went in, and after some shouting the beast got up and trotted down the nullah, when it was shot without difficulty. This was a young female of light build, under six feet in length, and

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having all the characteristics of youth, as regards coat, coloration, sexual indications, teeth and conformation of skull.

Next morning I started once more with forty beaters to find the two leopards lost on 12th April. In the second beat a leopard came out and made off down a nullah leading into open country. There two "stops" turned her uphill, and she galloped across me about forty yards off, when I broke both her shoulders with a shot well forward; her tail waved convulsively and she seemed *in extremis*; at any rate it was plain that she could not get up again. A prod with a spear elicited a growl, and a shot from a small rifle finished her off. This was an old female of good size, but thin. She was sent to camp to be skinned, and we went on with the day's work, but found nothing more.

I heard that near a village in the neighbourhood a goatherd was lying asleep, wrapped up in his dark brown blanket, when a leopard, apparently mistaking him for a goat, seized him by the leg and dragged him some distance. The people here dated everything from the last famine, which is not surprising, as such a terrible event must loom large in their simple lives. The country was at that time strewn in many places with human remains, and it was common to see skulls lying about in the fields. One reason why the people will not always tell of the presence of predaceous beasts is that, if the beast is hunted and escapes, they think that it will revenge itself on the informer. While they also say that some sahibs, if told that an animal is about, will swear at them and call them liars if they do not happen to find it. It is to be hoped that there are not many who would behave in this fashion. Where the people knew me, and

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where I got to know them in a few days in new localities, any reticence was soon overcome. If generously and kindly treated they are soon amenable, and in most cases willingly give information and assistance. It is an affair of tact, as Napoleon said of war and government.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Leopards of Deoderi

"The beast is laid down in his lair."
WILLIAM COWPER.

WE had now beaten all the country within some miles of camp, and it was advisable to move on to fresh ground. I started at daybreak on 19th April, the Mullah and some of the Brinjaras accompanying me. I shot three black buck in the first half-hour in order to provide my following with meat, and had the less compunction in shooting these animals as they were very numerous and caused extensive damage to the wheat and other crops. The country was beautiful after a shower of rain that had fallen during the night. The foliage had burst forth on many of the trees that fringed the banks of the nullahs and filled the valleys; the pipal, the neem and the mohwa were green, and yellow, and red, as with autumnal tints, and a few green trees and red-leaved mohwas stood on the brown hill-sides, which were, however, mostly grown with silver-barked salai. At a small hamlet, where there was a school, established by enterprising and beneficent medical missionaries from Jalna, I picked up sixteen men, and beat a neighbouring nullah, but found nothing.

We then moved across a wide and stony plateau and came to the brink of a valley, at the head of which was the Deoderi nullah, reported to be inhabited by a leopard. On the height on the edge of the valley was a newly constructed well, near which the leopard had rolled on

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the ground, and where it had lain in a slight depression to watch for antelope. At some distance from this spot it had killed a doe and dragged it into the Deoderi, a broad, deep valley, some five or six hundred yards in length, filled with jungle, in places very dense; there was plentiful water in the nullah. The surrounding country was bare and cultivated except for the hill-sides and nullahs which intersected them. The beaters went in and the leopard soon showed itself, and was with difficulty driven some distance towards me. But I had posted myself too far ahead, where only spare trees clothed the hillside, and the beast was unwilling to abandon the cool shade of the Deoderi. It broke back through the beaters, who were insufficient in number.

I sent to a neighbouring village for twenty more, bringing our total strength up to forty-five, and took post some four hundred yards higher up in thick jungle, but commanding an open glade. As the beaters came along the leopard entered a thicket just in front of me, stayed there some time, and then ran out and was shot through the body; the jungle was dense and several shots were necessary, but the beast did not travel ten yards after being hit. This was a fine female, well fed and of stout build. After the beat was over I parted with the Mullah, with great regret, and went on to my new camp, which was in a less pleasant spot than the old one, under some small trees near a village in bare, brown fields. I saw this faithful old friend once more when he visited me at my last camp. In saying farewell he raised his hands to bless me and laid his turban at my feet. The surrounding country was nearly all under cultivation, but there was a little jungle on the low hills. At a

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village on the way to camp a relative of the Mullah told me there were leopards in the neighbourhood, and he recently had been scratched by one in a field of millet. The animal suddenly jumped up and put its paws on his shoulders, but did not bite him.

Early on 21st April I went out with eighteen beaters across a low range of hills, but found nothing there. We then came upon the fresh tracks of a leopard in a ploughed field, took up the direction in which it had gone, and beat more country without result. At one o'clock I took a spear and tried to ride down a black buck which the Subadar-Major had wounded, but my old horse had not enough pace over the ploughed land. We beat more ground, and in a small nullah close to a village found the remains of a dog and a goat. The villagers were very reticent. They would not say the name of a beast of prey, but after some difficulty I extracted the information that an animal, which they would not specify, had killed goats and dogs, and even a pony in the village. Then we found fresh tracks leading from the nullah, where the remains of the goat and dog were found. Taking the direction of the tracks we put up a sounder of pig, but my horse again was not fast enough. Then near sunset we came to the far side of the hills, where the slope just above a village was clothed with sparse jungle. It seemed a likely place for the leopard.

Soon after the beaters went in the beast trotted across my front about eighty yards off, and I knocked it over with a bullet that broke both hind-quarters. The leopard scrambled about among the bushes, and I finished her off with several more shots. Two or three of these whistled over the hamlet below, causing considerable alarm among the inhabitants, as well as to a few people wending their

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way homeward along a path on which a man was placed to stop the traffic. This was a small, light female, young and immature, thickly spotted, and with a dark, rough fur. It had taken up its abode with remarkable fearlessness in the midst of a group of villages where there was little cover. It is fortunate that in this part of the country these animals did not take to man-eating.

After a day's rest we again visited the Deoderi. It was one of the days when everything seemed to go wrong. The place was some five miles from camp, and emissaries, sent the day before, reported that a leopard had gone into the nullah. I started with a dozen men and *en route* the number swelled to forty. We found fresh tracks, and, instead of lining across the nullah from below, as I intended, until arrival at the spot where the last leopard was shot, the Subadar-Major persuaded me to go straight to my post. My idea had been to cause the animal to move on up the nullah, if by any chance he was lying among the sparse bushes lower down. But Dade Hayat said: "Why should he be there when the thick cover and water are higher up?" So I made straight for my post, sending the beaters round to their position. Then I did another stupid thing in not carrying my rifle as usual on such occasions, and the gun-bearer followed me. It is the unexpected that happens, and the result shows that no precautions should be omitted. Half way down the hill, near a small clump of bushes, the two or three villagers preceding me began to run; the Subadar-Major, who was in front, called out, but I did not know what he said, although I realised that the game was in sight. I stopped near a bush and then smelt the beast close by, beckoned to the sepoy behind for my rifle and peered into the bush, where it was so dark that I could

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see nothing, although the smell of wild beast was very strong. Then I moved on across the nullah to where the other men were. The leopard now got up, where it had been lying at my feet in the bush, and made off over a rise, the Subadar-Major firing an ineffectual shot as it went. It might have been wounded although there was no blood, so I got all the beaters out of cover into the open field above, and, having posted a few look-out men in trees, decided to go on along the valley in another direction where a leopard had killed a goat the day before, and return later to deal with this animal.

We beat along the hillside, and in the second beat put up a fair-sized leopard of light colour, which came trotting along straight towards me. Suddenly it crouched behind a boulder, having seen me or a villager in a tree behind me; and then as the beat came on it broke into a gallop across the high ground on my right. I fired two shots, the second an obvious miss. My first shot evidently passed just underneath, as there was the splash of the bullet and a patch of fur on a stone, but no blood. We beat for it again farther on, but the beast was now in no temper to be driven; it broke back with a roar, charged the beaters and scratched one man slightly on the thigh. With great presence of mind he saved himself by "feeding" the leopard with a cloth he was carrying over his shoulder. It was now getting late and we had had a hard day's work. We went back to the Deoderi, where the look-out men reported that they had heard two leopards growling, roaring and fighting at intervals during the day. I took post where the last leopard was shot there, and the beaters came on with clamorous uproar. Soon a large male leopard came trotting down the nullah, and I fired two rapid shots as it was in view for

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a moment, and missed. Five minutes later a still larger male came along; I shot it through the body, and it galloped up the side of the hill with blood streaming from its flanks, but collapsed to a second shot. This was a very big old male. With good shooting I should have killed three this day, for the one that scratched the man was evidently not one of these two. The scratched man was rewarded with two rupees for having so cleverly saved himself from a mauling. He said there was a leopard in the Deoderi every day, and would continue to be, however many were shot. Among the beaters was a man with his back and shoulders covered with long black hair, whom we named "Bhalu"—the bear.

Immediately on my return to camp at the end of this day the Subadar-Major insisted on my going through a ceremony of thanksgiving to ward off the evil spirit of the leopard, after what he termed my narrow escape when the beast lay at my feet under the bush that morning. The danger was perhaps not very great, for the great cats seldom attack until molested, but such close proximity is unpleasant and might lead to aggression induced by fear on the part of the animal. The ceremony consisted in a live hen being brought, waved two or three times over my head, and then carried away. Presumably the hen was supposed to have assimilated the spirit of the wild beast.

We had a rest after this long day's work, and two days later returned to the same ground. The weather was cool and cloudy. We left the Deoderi until the end, hoping that any leopards missed would make for that favourite shelter and assemble there. We beat along the hills, and in the fourth beat an animal came out, which I at once recognised as the one that had scratched the man two

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days before. There was no mistaking its light colour and plump, sleek appearance. It came slowly along the crest of the hill, stopping at intervals, and I shot it dead with a bullet in the shoulder almost on the spot of its misdeed. This was a fair-sized female, fully grown, and had had young; it had a smooth coat and well-developed occipital ridge. In the next beat nothing came out, but a big leopard was seen to get up behind me and make off. We failed to locate him again, no tracks being visible on this rocky hill; and the Deoderi, where we hoped to find him, was empty. From the description of those who saw him, no doubt this was the one missed in the Deoderi two days before. The people do not mind their animals being killed by these beasts, and in this there is some reason, for they say that if they did not find plenty of other prey they might become man-eaters.

Next day we tried some new country. On the outskirts of a village we saw a large encampment of Jotisi. These are fortune-tellers who travel about the country and live on the credulity of the people, as do the same class of charlatans in England. They appeared to be well off, having plenty of tents, numbers of children, and a large herd of buffaloes. Then I came on two men ploughing, and asked if there were any leopards about; they denied all knowledge of such animals, but fifty yards farther on were fresh tracks of a leopard which had crossed the field that morning. In this part of the country these animals appear to kill considerable numbers of antelope. In the course of a fortnight I came on ten such kills, and this day picked up the head of a gazelle. On these plateaux, round the sides of which they live, they find the stalking of antelope facilitated by the bush-clad strips of waste land that divide the fields.

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I would recommend those encamping in this part of the country to avoid pitching their tents under tamarind-trees. At two such camps I was bitten severely by ticks, which made me quite ill for some hours; my hands and face swelled, and my ankle, where the bites were, became twice its normal size, causing pain and discomfort. The natives said that these ticks inflict a poisonous bite after passing through the bodies of crows which have swallowed them. The remedy is to rub the part with a raw onion, which reduces the swelling.

The last leopard, a very large one, shot during this expedition, had been devastating the villagers' cattle for seven years. We found its fresh tracks near the bed of the Purna-river and beat several likely nullahs, without result. Then we heard a monkey swearing vociferously half-a-mile off, and tracks showed that the beast had made off towards the hills. We drove it down again next day, and I missed it as it galloped past a hundred yards off. That night it killed a valuable cow near the river where we had first beaten for it. The carcass lay with the stomach and inside of the legs eaten out, and we tracked the leopard into dense cover, in which it was evidently lying up, as there were no tracks of exit. We beat the place, but nothing came out. After the beat was over the animal was seen skulking in the bushes. I went in, but could see nothing in the dense bush. The thicket was twenty yards through, and after a tremendous uproar by men placed on the far side the leopard rushed out and I shot it through the shoulder, and killed it with another bullet as it ran along the nullah. This was a very heavy old male. It had with difficulty got out of the thicket, and its head was scratched and bleeding from forcing its way through the bushes and thorns. One of

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the teats of the cow which it had eaten exuded from a bullet-wound in the back; in its agony the poor beast had bitten one of its paws, which could be extricated only by forcing open the jaws. This animal had a peculiar malformation of the tongue, which was split in two for about four inches of its length from the tip.

My observations during this trip confirmed what I have already written regarding the two so-called but non-existent species of *Felis Pardus*. Out of ten killed four were immature animals, presenting the characteristics previously noted—no occipital ridge, round skulls and rough coats. The other and mature animals had elongated skulls, with well-developed occipital ridges, and smooth, bright-coloured coats. Variations in size were only such as would be expected in different examples of a species.

There used to be hunting-leopards, commonly known as cheetahs, in this part of the country, and the Brinjaras reported that there was one inhabiting a fine nullah and extensive jungle, which looked as if it might well have held a tiger. They said there had been a pair, but that one had been captured by Pardis, a wandering tribe of trappers, a year or two before. I beat this jungle, where there were plentiful tracks of the cheetah, but we did not see it, and I had to leave India without ever coming across this rare animal in a wild state.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Raja's Domain

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods."
BYRON.

SOME thirty years ago I revisited the jungles of Mahor and arrived on the confines where I had been obliged to abandon the hunt after the cannibal tiger and his party, as related in a previous chapter. It took us only some ten days to pass through the Mahor jungles, making a bag of some half-dozen tigers on the way. Among these was a very cunning tigress which crept just ahead of the beaters—an instance of the necessity of remaining at one's post until the men have reached it. Then there was a tigress which had killed a four-horned antelope in a deep ravine, betrayed by descending vultures, and driven out and shot after a frightened bear had rushed past and escaped owing to the length of the grass. The former abode of the cannibal, of whom there was now no sign, contained only a tigress, which was killed after a running fight, in which it was fortunate that no one was injured. She charged the beaters fiercely when first driven out, and had to be followed up, for it was not fair to put the men in again with an angry beast in the cover.

The scene of this episode was on the border of an extensive forest region that had not been visited by Europeans for at least half-a-century. The chief inhabitants of the small hamlets scattered in the wilderness were aboriginal Gonds. These people, who are usually very

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black and of primitive habits and customs, inhabit a large tract of country between the Narbada and Godavery rivers, dwelling in forest and mountainous regions. Where water is scarce and streams are not perennial they wander considerably, often changing their habitations with the seasons. They have a habit of clearing a small area for cultivation, burning the jungle and thus fertilising the ground for the growth of their crops. Such land is free from tax for the first three years, so at the end of that period the Gonds shift their abode and repeat the process in a new locality, thus getting fresh fertilised ground and evading taxation. So it is that numerous sites of deserted villages are to be found in the Deccan forests.

In this region the higher uplands are for the greater part destitute of water in the hot season, but contain small hamlets which are inhabited at other times of the year. In the rainy season the abundant grass affords unlimited pasture for the herds of Brinjara cattle, these nomadic people taking up their abode on the higher plateaux. But in the hot months the hills are burnt and bare; no refreshing streams pour down the burning rocks; no spot of green relieves the arid waste; and both man and beast have fled to the lower valleys, where there still remains enough water to support life. Thither the attendant tigers follow the flocks to wooded plains, shady beds of rivers, and dark and cool ravines.

In this country I found Indru, a Gond hunter of primeval type, living in a thatched bamboo hovel. He was captured with difficulty. My shikaris, who went on ahead, said that the Gonds were so timid that if they went to the door of the hut the occupant would escape by the back, and if both back and front were guarded he

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would force his way out through the roof! Indru had never set eyes on a white man, and he must have been close on seventy years of age. Still he came to me fearlessly and sat at my feet, where a tot of rum put him quite at his ease. He was grizzled and wrinkled, of a somewhat simian cast of countenance, and altogether of uninviting aspect to the superficial observer; but I saw in him a mighty hunter, looking with fearless eyes, of few words and direct speech. He was armed with an old matchlock, and had a powder-flask made from the horn of a gazelle, which must have been very old, for it was worn quite smooth.

Indru told me that when he was a young man he had been tossed by a wounded bison, and the scars of the injuries could be seen in his wrinkled side. He had great influence among the Gonds, and even with the Raja, for whose domain I was bound. The shikaris believed in his power over tigers, and therefore wanted his assistance. The Gonds, they said, and Indru in particular, could turn aside my bullets and render them harmless; or they could close the jaws of tigers and so prevent their killing buffaloes tied up as bait. The old hunter joined my camp and accompanied me to the Raja's domain. But he had a presage of impending doom, for he told me that he would not go there again, as he expected to die in the forest. When I revisited the country two years later he had departed for the "Happy Hunting Grounds"; and I was not surprised to learn the manner of his death—due to one of those animals from which he had so narrowly escaped some fifty years before. He had wounded a bison, and was following it up, fearlessly as was his wont, along a dry watercourse. Suddenly the great beast rushed out upon

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him and hurled him to the ground, trampling and goring the poor old withered body into a lifeless mass. And so—

> "In that still spot, remote from men,
> Sleeps Indru in the narrow glen,"

—doubtless as he would have wished, in the forest he loved so well, where the bison and tiger "stamp o'er his head, and cannot break his sleep." Who would not envy him his life and his fate!

We passed through the great forest in two marches, and at nine o'clock in the morning rode up a gentle slope, from which a fine view of the surrounding country was obtained. In the foreground an extensive lake shimmered in the rays of the morning sun. I galloped up to a high embankment that penned in the glassy waters, now somewhat shrunken by the heat, for it was late in March. Myriads of wildfowl were in sight, clustered on the lake or winging their flight over the water. These were of non-migratory species—cotton teal, resembling a dwarf goose, and whistling teal, which flew round, with their dull red-brown plumage and peculiar cry; they nested in small trees and perched on the larger branches. There were also some comb-duck and a few belated ruddy sheldrakes. Some crocodiles basking on a spit of land that jutted from the shore plunged into the lake and swam out as I approached. The lake was bordered by giant trees—tamarind and banyan and mango—and was surrounded by green meadows, where numerous herds of cattle were at pasture. Below the embankment lay stretches of emerald ricefields, interspersed with groves of palms and patches of jungle. On the far shore stood some grey ruined

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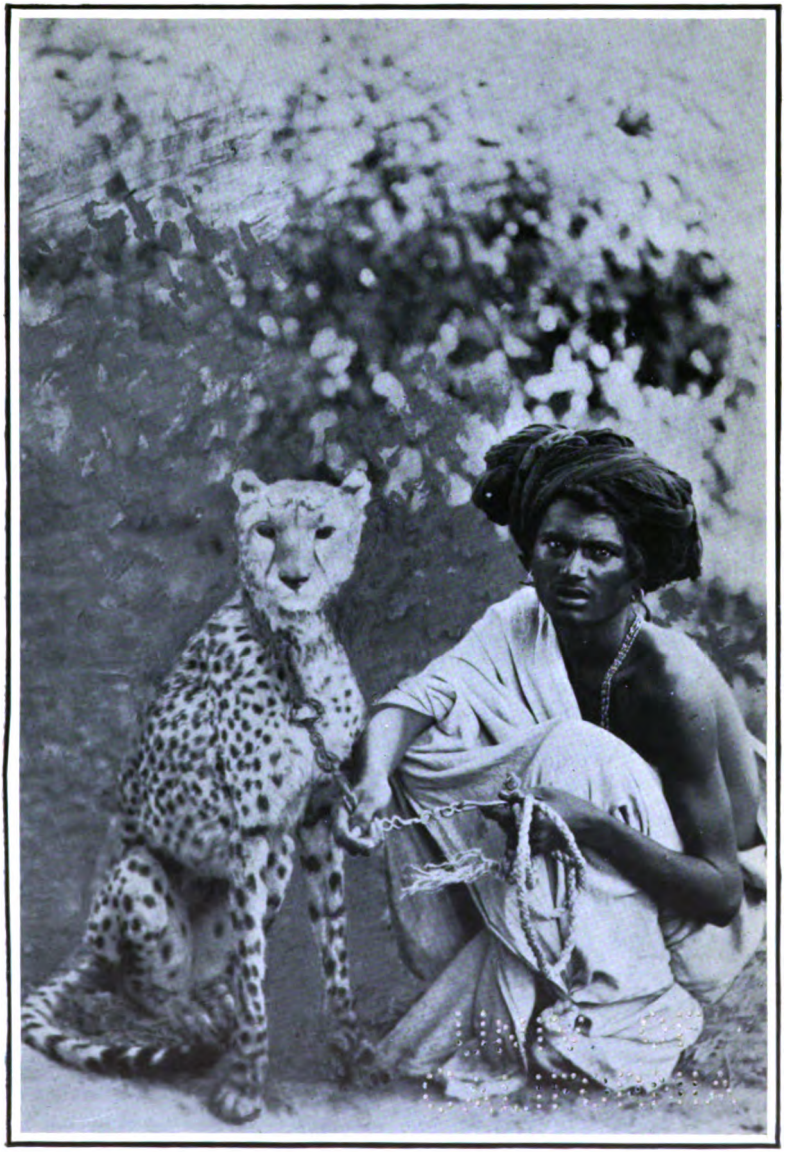

A HUNTING LEOPARD AND HIS KEEPER

The cheetah, distinguished by colouration, shape, arrangement of spots, and claws, from the panther or leopard, is caught when full-grown and trained to hunt antelope for the Princes of India. It is the swiftest of wild beasts.

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temples, fashioned by long-forgotten hands and fast crumbling into dust.

We at first encamped near a nullah on the hither shore of the lake. My men were full of superstitions regarding the Gonds, and of stories of numerous man-eating tigers, but these resolved themselves into one that had killed a herdsman a few months before. Late in the evening a great uproar arose in camp, with shrieks of "Tiger! Tiger!" I feared that a man had been carried off, and ran out with a loaded rifle; but the alarm had only been caused by the groundless fears of one of the followers, who had seen a man squatting by a pool of water in the nullah and mistaken him for a tiger, the man having imitated a tiger's growl on purpose to frighten his friend.

On arrival in camp I had dispatched a mounted sepoy to inform the Raja of my coming, and in the evening he arrived in a gaily caparisoned cart drawn by a pair of trotting bullocks, accompanied by a horde of retainers, one of whom bore a muzzle-loading gun belonging to his master. I had expected a black and primitive Gond, but was surprised to meet a fair-complexioned, well-dressed and quiet-spoken man—nervous, for he had never before conversed with a European—but with the manners of a gentleman, as indeed he proved to be. He promised all the help he could give me and placed the services of his men at my disposal.

The forest around the Raja's domain was of vast extent, but wild animals were not numerous. I walked through some twenty miles of forest one day in hopes of finding bison, but saw only some old tracks. There appeared to be a dwarf race of these animals in the

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vicinity, for on a wall of the mud-fort was the head of an old bull with abnormally small skull and horns. No doubt the Gond hunters keep down the game; and the small extent of cultivation would further account for a scarcity of wild beasts, for it is not in dense forests far from the habitations of man that wild animals exist in great numbers, but rather in those wooded regions that border on extensive tracts of cultivation. The Gonds are all hunters, dependent for their livelihood largely on the produce of the chase and of the forest. On the morning after my arrival, when exploring the nullahs for tracks of tigers, I found ambushes constructed near every pool of water, where hunters concealed themselves to shoot the animals that came down to drink. Under one platform built in a tree was hung the skin of a monkey filled with sand, placed there as a sort of fetish to propitiate the jungle god in favour of the occupant.

I returned the Raja's visit, sending two mounted men ahead to announce my coming. He resided in a small house built amid the ruins of the fort, which was over five hundred years old and had been the stronghold of his ancestors during troublous times. The Raja's ancestors had owned a large extent of country, now greatly reduced. The village was once a large and prosperous town containing some six thousand inhabitants, but there were now not more than two hundred, the population having been diminished by famine, pestilence and oppression. The Raja conducted me from the gate of the fort to his house, where a durbar hall furnished with three chairs had been prepared. His vizier, an old Musalman, stood behind his master's chair during the visit, and threw in an occasional remark.

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And when I took my leave I delighted the Raja with a present of an old saddle, a tent and a Norwegian knife. The tent was used for ceremonies of State for some years afterwards. I was sorry a few years later to hear of the death of my friend Raja Hanmant Rao, who was succeeded by his son, a young boy when I visited the domain.

I shot three tigers here. There was the great tiger of Kulur, which was escaping out of the beat to one side, having been alarmed and turned from his course by a four-horned antelope which ran across the path, but he was turned again by a bullet in the chest inflicting a severe but not mortal wound, and went back into the jungle in front of the beaters. Fortunately the tiger did not attack the men, but came slowly on, and was killed with a bullet in the shoulder as he passed in front of me. Then there was a tiger near the road not far from the lake. Shot through a hind leg, she galloped at once, but turned over like a rabbit with a bullet through the heart. At the same place a fine tiger killed a buffalo next night. We drove him out, and he came along the bank of the watercourse, growling fiercely and seeking whom he might devour. Happily no one was in his path, for he was very angry, and with strokes of his mighty paw he tore down, one after the other, several pieces of cotton cloth that had been hung on bushes at intervals to keep him in the beat. Then he descended into the nullah below me, and I shot him through the body, and fired again as he dashed up the bank and disappeared in a patch of long dry grass. At this moment my friend the Raja came riding along on a pony, all unconscious of danger, and was with some difficulty kept away from the spot where the tiger had

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disappeared. He had come to see the sport, and, like a good soldier, had marched to the sound of the guns. I entered the grass on the trail, and after a time saw the tiger lying down a few yards off. Fortunately he was stone-dead, for so closely did the coloration of the animal assimilate with the surroundings that I did not see him until I walked nearly on to him.

During the latter part of my stay I encamped on the farther shore of the lake, near some old temples not far from the Raja's fort, and here my tents were pitched when revisiting the place a couple of years afterwards, when I approached from the east instead of from the west. On this occasion we had no luck. Heavy rain had fallen and dispersed the tigers, and only old tracks were to be seen at first, although later on signs of the presence of game were found. We shot plenty of cotton and whistling teal, but the weather was too cool and damp, and green grass springing up everywhere showed the amount of rain that had fallen. I was told that bison came nightly to the ricefields before the rain fell, but they now found plentiful grazing in the forest. I made a round of some fourteen miles through dense rocky jungle to look for them, but only old tracks were to be found, and the jungle was singularly destitute of game. A tigress driven out next day was let through by incompetent stops; in the evening a tremendous thunderstorm came on, and we moved out of uninhabitable tents into the deserted temples.

There were three of these temples, one with a large verandah in front, pillared on granite columns. A communicative Brahmin told me these were a thousand years old. There was also a Muhammadan mosque in front of the temples, and in this my men took up

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their residence. The same Brahmin told me this had once been a place of Hindu worship, but during some religious troubles the Muhammadans took a cow and cut its throat on the threshold, thus desecrating the whole group of buildings. Thus, even in this remote spot, warring creeds had been in antagonism. We were here over a hundred and fifty miles from the nearest railway.

A few days before our arrival a leopard entered a hut in a neighbouring village and dragged out a Gond woman by the leg. On being driven off the beast rushed into another hut, seized an eight-year-old boy by the throat, and carried him off and devoured him. The shikaris declared that it was no use looking for the animal, as it had left the neighbourhood, having been driven off by the incantations of the Gonds. Questioned as to the meaning of this, they told me that when a tiger or leopard has been doing much damage to their flocks, or themselves, the Gonds sacrifice a bullock to the tiger-god and perform various rites and ceremonies to invoke his aid. On the night of the performance of these rites the god of the Gonds, represented by a great white tiger, walks about in the vicinity of the village and drives off the beast that has been committing depredations. In this the Hindu shikaris, and not only the animist Gonds, firmly believed, declaring that the tracks of the white tiger could be seen on the jungle paths on the morning after the performance of these ceremonies. On my next visit to the Raja's domain a leopard had visited a village at night and, stepping over a man and a dog, had seized and borne off a child sleeping beside them. This may or may not have been the animal of two years before.

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When a tiger I had killed was carried through a Gond hamlet, the bearers were asked to lay it down for the people to see. Women and children then came out and did obeisance to the dead monster, some bringing small copper coins or cowrie shells, which they placed on the body, and which were afterwards collected by the shikaris. A red caste mark also was smeared on the tiger's forehead. Indeed the veneration of so magnificent and wonderful a creature can easily be understood by those who have seen the tiger in its native wilds, and who have experienced its charge or witnessed the impetuosity and ferocity of its attack.

The first year that I visited the Raja's domain was the beginning of several lean years, which culminated in a terrible famine, although the scarcity had not as yet greatly affected the district. The country was sparsely populated, and the people were hardly able to eke out a living with the aid of the produce of the jungle, which seemed to be more bounteous in times of scarcity. The fleshy leaves of the mohwa-tree, now in full blossom, and the fruits of ebony and bher and other shrubs and trees, afforded the inhabitants a grateful sustenance, and whole families might be seen assembled beneath the trees with their baskets, collecting the flowers of the mohwa, which fell like manna in the days of old. Nor was Nature's bounty this year confined to the usual limits. The seeds of the bamboos which grew upon the hillsides proved to be a veritable godsend to the poor people whose crops had failed them, for they furnished a large supply of nourishing food. Nevertheless the effects of famine were beginning to be apparent. The cattle were dying in great numbers for lack of fodder, and their bones strewed the countryside just as human bones did when

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famine conditions were fully established. In some places there was so great a shortage of water that I had to move my camp to more suitable localities.

My success with tigers in the Raja's domain was ascribed by my followers to the beneficent influence of these jungle people and their chief, who would have warned the tigers had they not been propitiated. Indeed the escape of a tigress was attributed to her being under the special protection of the sylvan deity. This animal killed three of my buffaloes, but always went off to a distance and could not be found. We tried to stalk her on the kill, as I had done with success with one of these beasts on a previous expedition, but at dawn she had already left the reeking carcass of a buffalo killed during the night. Then at last we drove her out, but I missed a snap-shot at her through the trees as she galloped past. This was sure proof that she was protected. "For," said Nathu, "in all our wanderings in past years how many tigers have we seen and slain? And of those seen not one has before escaped with its life. Then assuredly there is magic in this case. Let us leave this beast which the Gonds tell us bears a charmed life!"

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CHAPTER TWENTY

The Tigers of Jangaon

"This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd."
BYRON.

THE day came to leave the Raja's domain, so we packed our tents and at dawn set out across the mountains, climbing a steep and rugged path and emerging upon a broad plateau some twenty miles in length. At a little hamlet where we encamped the people had never seen either white men or camels, and sat around gazing with wonder at the strange creatures. Some stood in front of the camels, pointing at them and roaring with laughter at these grotesque animals; and one small boy kept on salaaming for some time, repeating the words "*Bhagwan Sirke!*" —"The Almighty Ruler!" There were no tigers on this plateau, but I heard of game ahead, and sent on some of my men to collect information.

A great part of this plateau was cultivated, but forest grew upon the hills and in the deep ravines. On the far side lay another water system, the valley of the Wardha river, approached by a steep descent, and accessible for wheeled vehicles and camels only by a wide detour. But I wished to descend direct into a valley below, whence my men had sent news of tigers, so, sending the camels and carts with heavy baggage by the circuitous route, I obtained some twenty men from the hamlets to carry the necessary

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light camp and supplies, and with these descended the mountain-side.

Our path lay through dense forest containing clumps of thick bamboos and tall ebony and other trees, among which the Flame of the Forest splashed its scarlet tongues. The bed of the stream into which I descended, followed by Bhima, Nathu and Chunder, spears in hand, was strewn with huge boulders, which looked as though torn by titanic hands from the overhanging cliffs above and hurled with thunderous volume into the vale below. The stream was for the most part dry, but here and there were silent shaded pools, on whose umbrageous margins refreshing verdure relieved the grey-brown tints of the arid landscape. The bamboos were all dry and withered, and sometimes whole clumps of them lay supine, torn up by the roots. A general seeding of the bamboos, said to take place but once in thirty years, had occurred, after which they all wither and die. No living thing stirred in this sombre and secluded glen except the cicadas, which screeched aloud with ceaseless and monotonous stridulation. But as we emerged from this valley of the shadow, and towards evening approached the neighbourhood of our new camping-ground, the jungle fowl and pea-fowl began to awake the woodland echoes, and spotted deer barked at intervals. Sometimes bright peacocks glittered, with tails like emerald cascades in the evening light, and monkeys—grey and brown—chattering at the intruders in their sylvan domain, swung from branch to branch.

My camp was pitched under some tamarind-trees, near a small village, on the margin of a broad and stony river-bed, which contained a considerable amount of

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water distributed throughout its length in pools; it was much overgrown with shady jamun and tamarisk, in which the tigers could find ample shelter and water during the heat of the day. There were here an old pair of tigers long known to the inhabitants, who said they had lived there for twelve or fourteen years. They had killed many fat kine, and so fearless had they become that they were in the habit of entering the cattle-pens at night and carrying off the inmates. That night they killed one of my buffaloes and held high revelry, for the wretched animal was torn to pieces and devoured, leaving only a few scattered bones in the river-bed.

We collected thirty beaters, and the pair were driven out and shot without difficulty. They were very old, with faded coats and broken teeth. Another tiger was killed next day, and on my next visit I killed three more here, when there were many tigers in the neighbourhood. There was a party of a tigress with two cubs nearly as big as herself, being close upon eight feet long. She escaped, but I shot the cubs, one of which charged me fiercely, and was killed with a bullet that entered the neck and came out under the skin of the haunch. We drove the tigress out again next day, but she broke back with a rush and a roar through the beaters, fortunately injuring none of them. The same day I beat out another pair, which had been fighting and roaring half the night over a buffalo they had killed. I saw both, but could not get a shot at the tigress. The tiger came out through bamboo jungle, and in his rage at hearing the shouts of the beaters he roared angrily, and executed a kind of gambado in front of me. I shot him through the heart. He disappeared behind some clumps of

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bamboos, and I at once followed on the blood-tracks and found him lying dead a hundred yards off.

Our next camp lay fourteen miles to the east, and a march along the river-bed brought us to it in the evening. The jungle on the way looked an ideal haunt for tigers, but no evidence of their presence could be found. The baggage had awaited our arrival at the camp at Jangaon, a fine tiger jungle in the vicinity of a considerable village. Doubtless the jungles where I killed so many tigers thirty years ago have been largely cleared; indeed on my second visit, in 1899, there were signs that clearance for cultivation was proceeding apace.

A few years before there had been here a terrible tragedy. A sportsman wounded a tiger, and one of his men, an Arab, against his orders and apparently out of bravado, went into the jungle after it. In a moment there was a rush and a roar, and he was seized and bitten to death upon the spot. So greatly was the sportsman shocked that he would never hunt tigers again. My own feelings would have been different—more like that well-known Bombay soldier who was badly mauled by a leopard and lost one arm. Determined to be avenged on the whole race of leopards, he went on hunting them for years, until he had killed a hundred or more.

There were plenty of tigers at Jangaon thirty years ago. We drove out one monster which lay up in the tamarisk in the dry bed of a river where he had killed a buffalo. In the beat a whole farmyard of creatures came out. There was a herd of spotted deer, which passed in front of me unmolested, the stag leading; there followed a bevy of jungle fowl, cocks and hens, scrambling along over the dry leaves, and then a pack

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of pea-fowl, walking slowly, and stopping at intervals to look around. Suddenly all scuttled off, and then a peacock rose from the grass uttering the trumpet-note of alarm, and I knew the tiger was coming.

He was on the far bank of the river, and soon he strode out, a monster of his kind, paused upon the bank, and then leapt lightly down and came splashing through the water towards me, gleaming like molten gold in the light of the noonday sun. He passed close below me—within five yards from where I sat on the sloping bank—and I shot him through the body as he trotted along; he galloped on into bush-jungle, and we followed at once on the blood-tracks and found him dead. We killed another tigress here, making the bag up to thirteen in six weeks, and several more should have been shot, but we could not come to terms with them. A pair killed three cows one night on the river bank, but could not be found. Perhaps we shot these two years later, when these jungles produced a dozen more, including a pair killed in the place where the big tiger splashed through the water, and another fine tiger close by. This latter provided the only occasion on which I have been inconvenienced by the smoke of gunpowder in big-game shooting; for the tiger came along the bed of a deep nullah where the air was very still, and when he was shot the smoke hung for some moments, and the result of the shot was not disclosed until it cleared away and we saw the tiger lying dead.

In more than one tiger-beat my attention was attracted by the beautiful Paradise flycatcher, flitting about near me like a tiny fairy or phantom. The immature birds are brown, the adults pure white, both having black faces and two long plumes, one on either

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side of the tail. There is a Muhammadan legend that the bird was originally one of the most lovely birds in Paradise, all clothed in white, with twelve long plumes and a beautiful voice. But after meeting a real Bird of Paradise they complained to Allah that their own beauty was not perfect. Allah in his anger said that as they had displayed a wicked and envious spirit, and "blackened their faces" before him, they should become dull brown birds with black heads, but after a period of this punishment they should be allowed to resume their white garb, retaining only two of their tail-plumes, while their faces should be always black.

On my first visit I reached Jangaon from the west, after ranging the forests of the Pein Gunga, so that it was the *ultima thule* of the expedition. On the next occasion, travelling by rail to the terminus at Warora, and thence by road to Chanda, where horses were posted, we approached from the north, covering the distance from Warora to Chanda in a small springless cart drawn by a pair of fast-trotting bullocks. The dilapidated walls of Chanda were not without historic interest. The place was captured by a force under Colonel Adams during the Mahratta and Pindari war in 1818. Chanda was in those days a strong place, with walls six miles in circumference, surrounded by a parapet from fifteen to twenty feet high, and flanked by round towers. There was a citadel within the walls, which was defended by eighty guns and a garrison of two thousand Arabs. It was stormed and taken after a week's siege and bombardment, with a loss of fourteen killed and fifty-six wounded. Two hundred of the enemy were killed and one hundred taken prisoners. An officer who took part in the campaign wrote that "more paper was consumed in the

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compliments on this occasion than was expended in the cartridges discharged," and that the breach in the wall was so easy that the horse artillery galloped over it, the enemy flying and throwing themselves off the walls in every direction.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Wild Men & Wild Beasts

"Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey."
GOLDSMITH.

FROM Chanda we rode eighteen miles south to camp at Chandur, on the bank of an extensive nullah, which came down a long distance from the hills, and in which water and cover were plentiful. It contained a number of tigers, four of which were killed without difficulty, although I had several long tramps of fifteen miles or more before they were marked down. In one beat a curious incident occurred. I had just shot a fine tiger when a spotted stag came galloping along the bank of the nullah. Shot dead, it fell down the bank into a pool of water, when I found that the antlers had gone, although I had seen them plainly when the stag dashed by. On searching we found them in the water; they had dropped off—a curious circumstance, for this deer's horns should not be ready for casting, but should be mature at this season—the end of March.

One evening I was following a sambar stag when a herd of spotted deer appeared and saw me as I crouched. They then came walking out of the jungle towards me, the leader barking at intervals, and approached within thirty yards; they were all hinds. As I moved on they followed me for some distance, barking persistently. At this place a leopard killed a buffalo, but was driven off the kill by a pack of wild dogs which were seen in

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full cry chasing the leopard across the hills. In the evening I fired at, and missed, a dog and a pup at the kill; they made off with a whimpering cry.

Thinking that all the tigers in the neighbourhood had now been slain, I sent my shikaris on fifteen miles next day, intending to follow them with the camp the day after. At about midday we went out to beat a big hill on the opposite side of the stream where we had observed marks of bears. Soon a big black bear came to the top of the hill, receiving a bullet as he breasted the crest. He turned hurriedly down again and dropped dead some thirty yards off. In the evening we heard that a cow had been killed near a Brinjara encampment a mile or so from the tents. Hurrying to the spot, we found tracks of a big tiger, while the carcass of a white cow lay in thick jungle. None of it had been eaten. It was too late to beat. The sun was no more than a spear's length above the hills in the west, and the tiger would be on the move. So we climbed trees over the kill, hoping that he would return. But nothing came. Very probably the beast was watching our proceedings the whole time, crouched in the adjacent cover. After an hour's vigil we descended from our uncomfortable post and returned to camp.

In the morning, having struck the tents, we went to the scene of the tragedy. Much of the carcass had been eaten, and the body of a small unborn calf, torn from the mother, lay beside the remains. Jackals and crows were at work, showing that the tiger had left the immediate vicinity. We followed the great beast's tracks to a pool of water in the nullah where it had quenched its thirst in the night, and from which it had returned to the kill. Carefully circling the whole cover, I could

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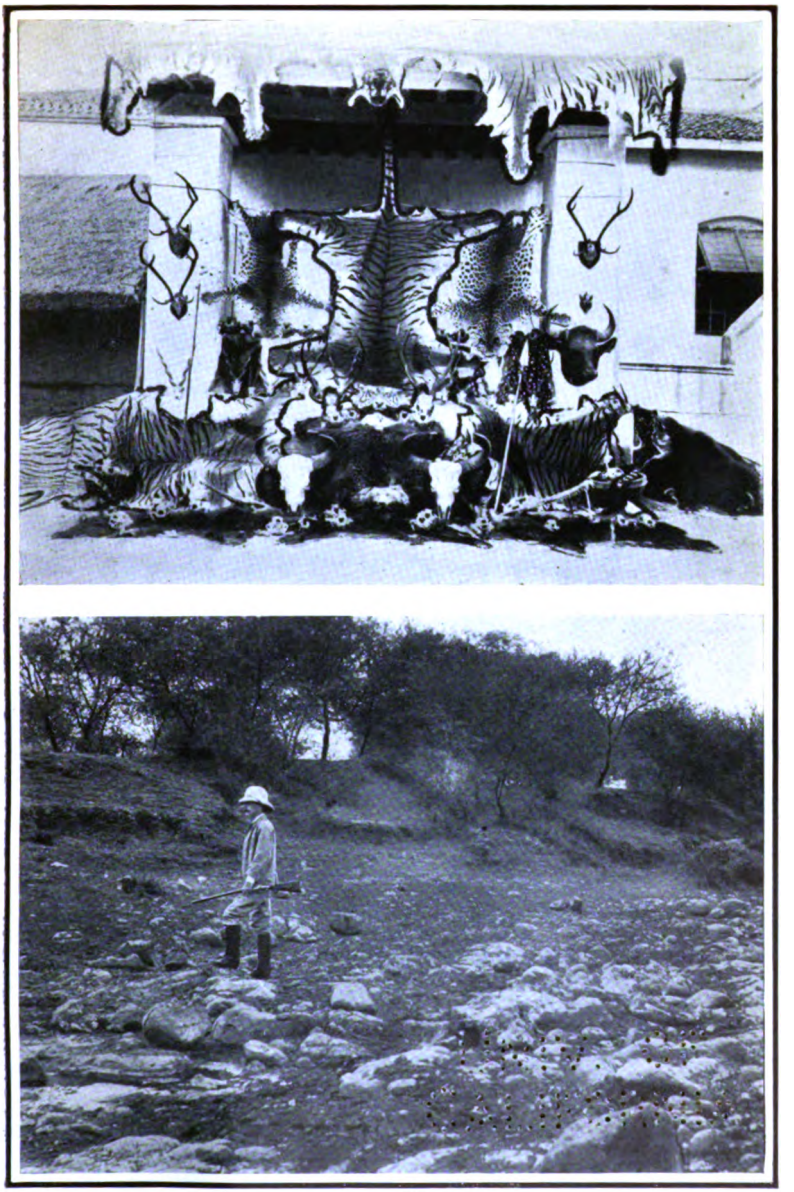

TROPHIES OF THE CHASE

A collection of some skins and heads of wild game shot by the author.

TRACKING THE JALNA TIGER

The author tracking a tiger which entered the cantonment; it severely mauled one man and killed another before it was hunted down and shot

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find no tracks to show that the tiger had left, but when we beat the place we could not find the beast.

I had at this camp much assistance from the Brinjaras, of whom some mention has been made before. These people are good sportsmen, plucky and trustworthy. They are much addicted to the chase and, assisted by a fierce breed of dogs, they hunt down and spear their game. The haunts of tigers are frequently known to them, owing to the depredations committed by these animals on their herds, and they are always ready to assist in hunting the great beasts of prey. They are not secretive as to the presence of wild beasts, as are often the Gonds and the villagers of the Deccan, although I generally have found them also ready to help and give information when they have got to know me and I have obtained their confidence. In bygone days the Brinjaras were rich and owned vast herds of cattle; they were the principal means for the transport service of armies in time of war, when they supplied grain, which they transported from place to place. They were, and still are to a considerable extent, a nomadic people, living in tents or temporary shelters. I find that they have many words in common with the gypsies, according to the vocabulary in George Borrow's *Lavengro*. Colonel Wilks, in his *History of Mysore*, relates that on one occasion, when questioned as to their origin and asked as to their country and home, one of the headmen pointed to the tent which covered his grain-bags and said: "That is our country, and wherever it is pitched is our home; my ancestors never told me of any other." Since the days of Muhammad bin Tughlak, in 1340, the Brinjaras have figured in the supply of armies in all campaigns in India. They are still to be found with

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their droves of pack-bullocks employed as carriers in the remoter parts of the country. But with the spread of railways and other means of communication their occupation is almost gone, and they are fast settling down, although their encampments, with the women dressed in picturesque parti-coloured skirts and a profusion of anklets and other ornaments, are known to all who have wandered in the wilder parts of the country.

After the last tiger-hunt we rode fifteen miles to the next camping-ground, but there was here a great scarcity of water, and a wandering tiger could not be brought to bag, so we moved on through a pass in the hills. Here in the narrow way, which was about a mile long, a great storm arose, and the rain poured down the pass in a torrent. We pressed on with difficulty through the blinding storm, and at night reached a Gond village in a wet and bedraggled condition. But in the Raj Gonds of this village we found good Samaritans; they emptied a hut for us and lighted fires, at which we dried our clothes, and they sent out carts to help in bringing the baggage along the heavy road. In coming through the pass one of our camels slipped and fell into a deep ravine, where it was found dead in the morning. Another bolted in the darkness, but was found none the worse next day. This was fortunate for the owner, whom I compensated with the value of the one that was killed; he told me that he had known a tiger attack a camel, seizing it by the neck as it lay on the ground.

Later on I discovered, a few miles from my camp, a wild Gond shikari living in the depths of the jungle with his family. He proved a useful addition to my followers. He lived like the wild animals he hunted, and was almost as wild; he was a young man and, as in the case of Indru,

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A HOODED CHEETAH, OR HUNTING LEOPARD, AND KEEPER IN CART (*see* p. 238)

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I was the first white man he had seen. He had made a rude dwelling-place at the head of a nullah and supported his family entirely on the produce of the chase and the forest. A dose of rum and a few rupees made him most amenable, and he was delighted with a few empty bottles. He had many jungle tales to relate. I found a place where a tiger had rolled in the mud near a pool of rain-water, and the Gond declared that he had witnessed a fight between this tiger and a great bull bison which inhabited the hills about five miles from camp. The tiger had attacked the bison twice, getting on to its head each time, and had then retired discomfited from the fray. There was no reason to doubt his story, for, as already related, I had known tigers kill bison on more than one occasion. When I shot this tiger a few days later he showed no scars of the combat.

That night, being kept awake by a severe attack of fever, I heard a continuous caterwauling of pea-fowl about midnight. The noise was taken up in the hills two miles from camp, and from thence spread to the river-bed not far from us, indicating the course taken by a predaceous beast on the prowl. I surmised that the big tiger had come down to the river and killed one of my buffaloes, which proved to be the case. He should have been brought to bag, but one of the stops spoilt the beat by disturbing the tiger, which went off up the river. That night he killed another buffalo, whilst there was another kill ten miles off, and a third by a tigress near a pool of water in the bamboo jungle in the hills. We went to the distant one. I had difficulty in getting to the place owing to severe fever and ague, and the tiger slipped off into dense jungle without showing himself. Next day we started to beat the big tiger five miles up the river.

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Our way lay through most beautiful country. The river contained broad reaches of deep water flowing between banks clad with verdure, and reflecting in its glassy depths the tall forest trees and graceful bamboo clumps that grew upon the margin. At times a peacock, disturbed at our approach, rose noisily from cover and winged its way across to the farther bank, its jewelled train glittering in the sun. Four-horned antelope were seen standing in the shade of the trees, and spotted deer roused the echoes with their shrill bark or dipped their velvet muzzles in the pellucid stream which reflected their graceful forms. It was indeed an Elysium on earth! But on the way the fever, which had oppressed me for some days, came on with renewed violence; and I had to be supported by a mounted man on either side to keep me from falling from my horse.

Arrived on the field of action, I took up my position on the high bank of the river-bed and forgot all about the fever, which must have left me during the beat. For when the tiger came galloping up from behind me, crashing through the fallen bamboos, and sprang down the bank close to me, I was as steady as a rock and shot him between the shoulders. He was an immense old tiger of a light colour, with a fine ruff round his brindled head. I then rode off five miles to look for the tigress in the hills, but the beat was an almost impossible one, and she broke out without showing herself.

Tigers do not often kill in the heat of the day, but after shooting a pair one day we heard that one of our buffaloes, which I had viewed that morning, had been killed about midday some miles off. It was too late to arrange a beat, but we started early next morning and at noon drove the tiger out of the cover, which was one in

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which I had killed a tiger two years before. My brother was posted in a tree a few feet from the ground, and he knocked over the tiger when it came along near him; but it got up again and, climbing a high ant-hill close to him, attempted to claw him out of the tree. I fired from a distance and broke a hind leg, but the tiger, after spinning round and round, clambered up the ant-hill and tried to get at him, in which it would probably have succeeded but for the broken leg. It was finished off with another bullet.

The last tiger I killed in these jungles tried to break out of the beat, and was turned only with difficulty by the stops, my sepoy orderly having at last to throw his shoes at the beast after it had stayed in front of him for five minutes, roaring fiercely at him; he was, fortunately, perched well up in a tree. The tiger then galloped out, roaring all the time, and came straight towards me, when I shot him through the top of the head. He plunged forward five yards, sprawling at my feet, and a bullet in the neck put an end to his struggles. The head is not ordinarily a good mark to fire at, the brain offering a small surface. A tigress shot in the mouth gave much trouble, and a tiger which I hit on the nose required two more shots.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Chronicles of Jalna

"They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank deep."
OMAR KHAYYÁM.

THERE is no sadder sight in India than an abandoned cantonment, left derelict and desolate after the departure of the last of the generations of soldiers who have garrisoned it since the early days of English occupation. The lines or barracks are falling into ruins; the bungalows are perhaps occupied by cattle or by squalid families from the bazaar; the mess, where we spent so many pleasant evenings, has shared the same fate; the tennis-courts and gardens have disappeared, or taken on the same drab hue as the surrounding plain; the echoes which once resounded with the tramp of horse, foot and artillery are for ever silent. The cemetery is well tended, and tells something of the history of bygone years and of the small communities which occupied the place. There were fashions in tombstones as in other things. There is a large mausoleum inscribed with a lengthy panegyric of the forgotten dead, as well as more humble crosses and marble slabs, whilst the graves of private soldiers who died in exile in the bad old days may be marked only by numbers. One tomb shows that an artillery subaltern, buried nearly a hundred years ago, was killed by a tiger a few miles off. Another marks the last resting-place of an officer slain in an encounter with robbers. A broken

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column, bearing the single word "Carissima," may signify a story of poignant tragedy. Such was the deserted cantonment of Jalna when I last saw it, already nearly fifteen years ago.

Jalna is a place of some historic interest. It lies in the centre of the country which formed the theatre of Wellesley's operations in the Mahratta War of 1803. On 2nd September of that year Wellesley, as described in a letter he wrote to Colonel Stevenson, heard the sound of Stevenson's guns engaged in an attack on the fort of Jalna. The fort, still bearing the marks of cannon-shot, is crumbling into dust on the outskirts of the bazaar and of the walled city. A lonely grave in the cantonment is said to be that of an officer killed in a duel before the cemetery was made. The cantonment was occupied by a brigade of all arms of the Hyderabad subsidiary force for many years, and when that was withdrawn, in 1861, it was taken over by the Hyderabad Contingent, and was occupied by one infantry regiment until its abandonment in 1903.

Jalna was nearly a hundred miles from the railway when I first visited it more than thirty years ago, when Staff Officer to the General Officer Commanding the Contingent. I marched from Hingoli, a distance of ninety miles, taking a week on the way, in order to enjoy the good sport afforded by herds of antelope, many gazelle, some blue bull and plentiful feathered game. There were at most places both grey and painted partridges, two species of sand-grouse, green pigeons and blue rocks, pea-fowl, quail and hares, and duck and snipe where there was water. On one occasion, when I was beating a wooded nullah, a wild cat walked out with a pea-chick in its mouth, and I bagged both cat and chick.

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I had some good duck-shooting at the Lake of Lonar, a wonderful sheet of bituminous water, which looked like the crater of an extinct volcano. Then, on a plateau overlooking the cantonment of Jalna, when riding in to camp after a long chase, I killed a leopard with a snap-shot as it was galloping across an open space in a patch of jungle.

Nearly three years later, after a visit to Europe, I rejoined my regiment, which had marched from Hingoli to Jalna in the meantime. Prospects of sport were good, for there was plenty of small game in the neighbourhood, and the country to the north within twenty miles was infested with panthers, although there were said to be no tigers within fifty or sixty miles, and then only an occasional one in the Ajanta Hills. Jalna is a picturesque spot, well wooded, planted with fine banyan-trees and some groves of thorny acacia, the bark of which is extensively used for tanning and dyeing.

On the second day of my arrival from England a gardener employed in the bungalow next to mine, then standing empty, came to say that there was a panther in the verandah of the house. I thought it was more probably a jungle cat, but I and my brother, with our sepoy orderlies and a few servants, took our rifles and went to the place. The verandah was empty. The gardens contained several rows of thick hedge, and we searched these, but saw nothing; nor were any tracks visible. There was a large patch of grass, but nothing could be seen in it. We then posted ourselves at the end of this patch, and our men walked through it in line, throwing stones. Suddenly there was a roar, and a tiger bounded out of the grass and over the hedge into the next compound. Before breaking out, however, the beast had had time to seize my orderly and maul him severely,

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inflicting several bites in his arm and shoulder; this was the work of a moment. The wounded man was sent to hospital, where he spent the next three months and made a good recovery. The news soon spread. The band ceased playing in the adjacent tennis-courts, as did the tennis players, and other officers assembled.

Taking with us my brother's bull-terrier, Sal, we proceeded to follow up the tiger. Sal soon turned the beast out of a deep ditch in which it was concealed, and it made off across the compound, followed by dog Sal and a fusillade. It appeared to be hit, but disappeared into a thickset hedge, which was like a dense patch of jungle of considerable extent. It was now dusk. We went close up to the hedge, but it was impossible to see anything, even with the aid of lanterns, and the only course was to leave it until next day.

In the early morning I took up the tracks and found that the tiger had crossed a road and made off in the direction of the hills; it had drunk at a pool in a nullah on the edge of the cantonment. From this point the tracks were lost on hard ground. A small quantity of blood showed that the tiger was wounded, and the tracks indicated that it was lame. During the next few days I rode daily some miles round in the direction taken by the tiger, and on the fifth day I was riding through a village some five miles out when I was told that a man had been seized by a wild beast in a millet-field close by. I saw the man, who was almost disembowelled; the surgeon could do little for him, and he soon died. He told me that while he was scaring birds in the field he heard a peculiar noise, and on walking to the place the beast sprang out and seized him. I went to the spot where he had been attacked and found the tiger's tracks

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and the unfortunate villager's turban and shoes and staff; there was a strong smell of wild beast. There was a great extent of tall millet, higher than a man's head, and we went through it, but failed to come up with the beast by nightfall, the tracks being lost on hard and stony soil. Next day more guns were assembled, and we took up the tracks from where we had last seen them and beat a large extent of country.

The tiger had now become a public danger. He apparently had been without food since first seen and might take to man-eating. The villagers were afraid to go to work in the fields or leave their hamlets after nightfall. It was necessary to hunt down the beast. With Lieutenant Lane, of my regiment, and dog Sal, whose master had left for England, I encamped not far from the spot where the tracks were last seen, and together with a native officer, Shaikh Dade Hayat, my frequent companion in sport for many years, and one of the finest men-at-arms in India, we took up the tiger's tracks. Following the most likely line of country, I found old pugs at water two miles off, but they could not possibly be followed over the hard ground and stony hills and ravines which characterised the country. I knew that the beast, like all tigers, especially when wounded, must suffer from thirst, so searched the water-holes in the vicinity, and next day found fresh tracks at a pool, and eventually traced the beast into a deep and narrow ravine with steep banks.

From this the tiger was soon hounded, with Sal in pursuit. It went into a thick clump of bushes, where tiger and terrier were seen nose to nose, roaring and barking at one another; then the tiger made a grab with his paw, and Sal, being heavy of body, was not

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quick enough, and was badly clawed down the chest. The tiger retreated farther into the cover, and was no longer visible when we came up. Sal was with difficulty got out, pouring with blood, but still tried to re-enter the cover after her enemy. We tried to make the beast break cover, even firing into the bushes with a shot-gun, but it would not move. So we all three crawled in on our hands and knees, and after a search found the tiger crouching, facing us a few feet off, when two or three shots finished it. This was a young tiger, between three and four years old. It had been wounded in the hind leg in the first encounter, but the wound already showed signs of healing. The dead animal was carried to camp by the delighted villagers, who were now able to resume their work in the fields. The tiger was eight feet two inches in length. It was taken in to the cantonment to be skinned, where some ten thousand people came to see it. Poor old Sal survived for a fortnight, but her wounds proved fatal in the end.

There seemed no reason why this tiger should have come into Jalna. There was little jungle in the vicinity, all the flat country being under cultivation, and while I killed many panthers within twenty miles of the place I never heard of another tiger. Colonel Havelock, who served many years in the regiment but had long retired, told me he had killed one tiger fourteen miles out, but this was thirty years before. The native ranks of the regiment were greatly exercised about this remarkable incident. I had shot many tigers elsewhere, and they regarded it as something more than uncanny that this animal had invaded my domain so soon after my return from England. They said that the tiger must have come in search of me with the intention of avenging those of

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his species which had been hunted down and put to death by me in former years. At any rate I got the best of the tigers, for in the following year I and my brother shot twelve in the Sirpur jungles.

The field of Assaye lay some thirty miles to the north of Jalna, and I paid it a visit, not only for its historical associations but in the hope of sport on the way. But the country was disappointing. The first camp was near a village in a desert-like country, although this was in December; water was plentiful, and the land should have been cultivated. The village was a mere collection of squalid mud-huts, although there was a massive stone gateway of solid construction forming the entrance to the long-disused fort—now crumbling into dust—a sign of turbulent times gone by. Now the gateway was half hidden by a rank undergrowth of prickly-pear and clinging tangled creepers, from the midst of which the carved stone buttresses and tall archway stood out, the sole sound things amid the surrounding corruption and decay.

We were disappointed in the hope of finding game, for the country contained scarcely a living thing. Assaye contained a Hindu temple with five minarets, something like a miniature of the Mosque of St Sophia at Stambul. It probably had been a Muhammadan mosque. We rode twenty miles to the north, where the legions had thundered past nearly a hundred years before, but where all was now peace. Here was a more prosperous town, situated at the foot of the Ajanta Hills, which I climbed in the afternoon. There were tracks of a leopard in the extensive cover, and I had a distant glimpse of a party of gazelle. The game appeared to have been cleared out by a colony of sporting Arabs who inhabited the

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town. I descended the rocky bed of a watercourse, which must have held a roaring torrent in the rainy season but was now almost dry, and only a few pools of water remained among the basaltic rocks. Beneath a ledge, in a deep water-worn cave hollowed out by the rains of countless ages, was a hyena's den, into which I peered in a vain attempt to discern the unsavoury occupant, whose lair was marked by innumerable bones scattered at the entrance.

We travelled back to Jalna by a different route, where we found some game. Here were sand-grouse on their way to drink at their usual hour of nine o'clock in the morning, their approach heralded by their peculiar cry. Flight after flight came either straight down to the water's edge, or alighted after circling round. These birds possess a fourth toe in a rudimentary state, and their habits are very like that of the little white-legged courier plover which we found on the same ground. In the neighbourhood I came across a very intelligent little herd-boy, who knew all about the beasts and the birds. He showed us where there were pea-fowl living among the bushes at the head of a ravine, and discoursed of their habits. Also there was a leopard which he saw sometimes; the beast had lately taken a calf from his flock. And what of antelope? "Yes," he said, "there are some pretty little ones which hiss like this when alarmed," and he imitated the hiss of a gazelle. We pitched our tents near a small village under some shady mango-trees in a pleasant spot amid flourishing gardens of betel and sugar-cane, limes and guavas. The music of the Persian wheel worked by oxen sounded in our ears, and enhanced the beauty of these surroundings.

On our march this day we breakfasted in the shade

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of a great banyan-tree, beneath which a yogi had established himself beside a small temple containing a red painted image. We were careful to set ourselves down at a distance from this shrine, but suddenly there was a great uproar, and the yogi came forth in a state of almost complete nudity, smeared from head to foot with wood-ashes, uttering the language of complaint, and beating himself about the head with some long iron bars like a pair of tongs. He prostrated himself in front of us, declaring that the gods had been defiled by our grooms having placed the saddles on the platform where the deity presided. The offending articles were at once removed, but the people of the village had not much sympathy with this holy mendicant, who, they said, lived on what they gave him and did no good.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Under the Mohwa-Tree

"Yet half a beast is the great god Pan."
E. B. BROWNING.

IN a ravine at the head of a valley eight miles from Jalna a leopard gave me a long chase. From afar off I observed vultures descending to a point on a distant hill, so called for my pony and rode to the spot, where I found the remains of a calf. I beat the surrounding jungle without result, but a few days later a man whom I had posted on the spot reported a goat killed near the same place. Again I rode out, and a leopard was seen for a moment when we beat through the jungle, but it disappeared and could not be found again. An officer of artillery had been killed here by one of these animals some thirty years before, and one of the villagers showed his scars received in the encounter and a letter of commendation given him for his behaviour. A week later I encamped on the spot, and sat in concealment over a tethered goat for two hours in the evening. But the cunning beast did not put in an appearance, although his fresh tracks indicated that he was in the habit of passing that way on his nightly round. I returned to camp by moonlight, and in the morning found that the goat had been killed and dragged into the bushes, where the uneaten portion was found. But we could find no leopard.

About half-a-mile off was another ravine, where I found the recent impress of the leopard's pad. The

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beaters were put in, and the leopard soon appeared making off towards the head of the nullah. I ran hard a hundred yards and cut him off, when he crouched among some bushes, out of which he was soon driven by a shower of stones. He broke back, and I fired two shots without apparent result. Having located him in a clump of bushes in the bed of the ravine, the beaters again went in after him, when a rush and a roar indicated that someone had been seized, and immediately the beast came bounding out in front of me, where I rolled him over with a shot behind the shoulder; but he quickly picked himself up and disappeared in the cover. One of the men had been clawed and two others scratched in the encounter. I then crept into the bushes on the track of blood, and after nearly half-an-hour's search found the leopard lying dead; it was most difficult to distinguish, for the sunlight shining through the leaves made a chequered shadow which blended exactly with the animal's coloration. All my bullets had hit the beast, but being solid, hardened projectiles, with which I had been supplied by mistake, instead of the usual hollow-pointed Express bullets, they had passed right through the leopard, where Express bullets would have floored him the first time. Had I known he was wounded I would certainly not have put the beaters in; but fortunately the injured men were not much hurt.

But my favourite camp was at Achli, at the foot of the plateau to the north, where the main valley was filled with mohwa-trees, which merit special notice both here and in the tiger jungles. As the manna from above was the means of preserving the wanderers in the desert, so are the fruits of trees that grow wild in tropical

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climates a godsend to the inhabitants of the wilds, who are largely dependent on the gifts of nature. And I have observed that in famine years such gifts are often more abundant than at other times. I have mentioned in a previous chapter how, in the year 1897, when famine prevailed, a general seeding of the bamboos took place. In 1900, another of these successive years of scarcity, the mohwa-tree blossomed in unusual profusion, and the people from the surrounding hamlets flocked to collect the fruit.

The mohwa is a large spreading tree, having a somewhat scanty foliage of green and crimson hues in the month of March, when the blossom is ripe. It blooms but once a year, with a yellow flower having thick, fleshy petals, and these fall as they ripen. They are disagreeable to the European palate, being sweet and sickly to the taste, and they diffuse their peculiar fragrance for a considerable distance around, so that the tainted air betrays the proximity of the tree before it is seen. At daybreak the people troop off to the trees, mostly women and children, carrying small baskets. I saw many famished families assembled, of all ages, from the infant in arms to the wrinkled granny, collecting the fallen blossoms.

The fruit is used in various ways. It is dried in the sun and eaten in the natural state, and from it also is distilled an intoxicating liquor. In Gond hamlets during March and April the blossoms may be seen spread out to dry outside the huts. The liquor is nauseous to the European taste but grateful to the natives. Perhaps the malodorous spirit known to British soldiers as "Billy Stink" is made from the mohwa; it was said to be so evil-smelling that the nose had to be held while

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it was being imbibed, but the old East India Company's soldiers were not fastidious.

The mohwa is not frequented by only the human inhabitants. Both wild and domesticated animals flock to it, so that where game is plentiful it is surprising that any fruit is left in the morning. Bears have a great predilection for it, and the trees may be seen scored by their claws—for Bruin has the advantage over beasts which cannot climb, and so have to be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from his table. I once found a couple of bears asleep under a mohwa-tree, and on another occasion two or more of these animals engaged in a noisy quarrel under a tree not far from camp. Being a dark night, it was no use going out to interrupt the hairy brawlers. Once a quartette of four-horned antelope—an unusual number to be in one party—were found feeding on the blossoms in the middle of the day. In the great jungles bison, sambar and spotted deer all resort to the waxy petals, and may be sought for in the vicinity. In more populous districts, such as Achli, on the outskirts of the villages and amid the sparse jungle bordering on cultivated tracts, the animals are obliged to take their share of the blossom under cover of darkness, for the people spend the day under the trees. At night the nilgai, antelope, gazelle and pigs flock to the spot, as can be seen from their footprints in the morning.

In favourable localities, as I observed at Achli, the gazelles troop down the paths by night, and remain under the mohwa until they are driven away at dawn by the approach of the human gatherers. Then they bound away on dainty feet, uttering short hisses of alarm as they stop to look back at the disturbers of their feast. Monkeys also—the great grey langur, with black

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face and hands, each female carrying a small monkey clasped to her bosom—take their share of the luscious fruit, while birds of many kinds flock to the trees and peck the flowers, round which innumerable insects add to the hum of life. It is easy to understand that the mohwa is doubly welcome in years when there is famine in the land. To the people it is perhaps the most valuable product of the jungle. What wonder that the poor inhabitants recognise it gratefully as a gift of the gods, and regard it as the tree of life, saying, as they collect the blossoms: "The mohwa is our father and our mother!" For it provides them with both food and drink each year, and saves them from starvation when they most acutely feel the pinch of famine.

Not far from my camp the patient, laborious cattle toiled the day through to draw water from the well, which was poured from the endless chain of earthenware pots into a wooden trough hollowed out of the trunk of a tree. Here it served to water thirsty animals, and the overflow ran down narrow channels to irrigate the fields and gardens near the village. In the famine year, when all the water in the hills dried up, wild animals resorted at night to the trough to drink. Hither came the nilgai, the antelope and the gazelle, all of which drink daily when they can obtain water, generally in the middle of the day, when they can be seen trooping down to stream and pool. Their tracks where they drink at night at the wooden trough, which they cannot approach by day, may be plainly seen in the morning. Around the life-giving water all that passes during the night may be read in the book of nature. There is the beaten track of many little pointed feet of the gazelle and the larger spoor of the antelope. The pugs of the leopard may be traced on any

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of the dusty paths that approach the trough or water-channel. The porcupines, most nocturnal of creatures, come down from their cave-dwellings in the banks of the dry ravines and in the hillsides and drop their quills upon the path. On one occasion a goat that I had tied up as bait to attract a leopard was pierced to the heart and killed by the quills of a porcupine, which must have backed into it. The natives say they shoot their quills like arrows from a bow! Jackals, foxes, wild cats, hares, pea-fowl, partridges and little quail—all these have been down to the life-giving water and left unmistakable impress of their presence.

And in this famine year I often saw the grisly tracks of death. There were human skulls and bones. One morning I came upon a human skeleton, evidently but lately dead, picked clean by foul beasts during the night, and now lying grim and ghastly in the light of the rising sun. A small pool of water, the only one in all that arid desert, lay in the adjacent nullah, towards which the bony arms were stretched, as though in mute appeal. A wretched rag that had formed the clothing of the wanderer lay beside the sad remains. The wayfarer's staff was lying near where it had fallen from the dying grasp. His tottering steps had failed at the margin of the water for which he was making. There he had gasped out his life. The eyes that once glowed in those now empty sockets had been plucked forth by vultures; the heart which once beat beneath those gleaming and bloodstained ribs had been torn out and rent by jackals, which had stolen away from the scene of the tragedy at dawn of day. Death had tracked him down!

I observed that foxes suffered severely in the famine year, although the reason was not apparent. These little

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animals feed largely on beetles and other insects, and no doubt prey also on the jerboa rats, which were especially abundant in one season of scarcity; there was quite a plague of them. However, I saw many dead foxes, and some of those chased by my dogs were so feeble that they gave but a poor run.

The misery and sufferings of the wild creatures, their vain search for food and water, are as a rule hidden from human observation; for wild life is given to concealment, and suffers and dies in hidden places, even though it may issue forth more often into the light of day in time of trouble, when driven to forget the fear of man. There may be an unwonted assemblage of wild creatures in proximity to human habitations, where some water may be found when there is none remaining in the usual spots. In 1900 I noticed that the little brown bush-quail had almost entirely disappeared. Earlier in the year, when the drought was only beginning, these little birds could be seen congregating under water-pipes and at the issues of bathrooms, and about the bungalows, where they were often picked up dead. Perhaps they are more delicate than other birds. The pea-fowl, too, must have suffered greatly. They, above all land birds, require a plentiful supply of water, and are never found in localities where it is absent. In the Deccan they are wild in most localities, and not semi-domesticated as they are in places where they are held sacred. In the vicinity of Jalna they afforded very good sport, especially when driven out, where they gave long overhead shots. I have seen one tower and then, with its eight feet of tail and extended wings, descend like a parachute. In the drought they were less wary than usual, and could be seen pecking about in the vicinity of the villages.

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Generally one has to drive them out of cover, and they are quicker-sighted than any wild creature. But when the season of famine was succeeded by a year of plenty nature seemed to compensate, for game was very plentiful, and I observed unusually large numbers of partridges and quail. The sportsman should be especially merciful in times when there is famine in the land.

Partridges were of two kinds, the painted and the grey francolin. The latter were the commoner, being especially plentiful in the vicinity of villages; they are persistent runners, so do not afford as good sport as the painted francolin, which rises well, especially where it frequents patches of high grass, when it generally flies upwards. It roosts in trees, and its harsh call is a welcome sound in the early mornings. I used to employ a line of beaters for small-game shooting, but with a country-bred spaniel better sport can be obtained. An English dog will not be able to work in a climate which is hot, even during the cooler season of the year. The breeding seasons of Indian game are rather variable; I have found the eggs of sand-grouse in both December and March, but the partridges and quail are more regular in this respect.

I have already observed how numerous leopards were in this part of the country. They were also bold and destructive. At one village a leopard killed a goat and was dragging it over a wall when the owner arrived on the scene and seized his property by the hind legs. A tug-of-war ensued between man and leopard, in which the wild beast was victorious and carried off his prey. Then one morning I was crossing a sandy and grass-grown nullah in the plain when I saw the fresh tracks of a leopard. We followed on the tracks, which led into

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some porcupine dens in the bank of the nullah, and we were discussing the situation when the leopard bounded out of a hole and disappeared in long grass and thick bushes, where he squatted. We had only shot-guns, but followed him up, when he allowed us to pass and then dashed back into the hole. After a short time he came out again just below me, and I hit him above the tail with a charge of No. 1 shot, whereupon he quickly scrambled back into his den. Then we tried to smoke him out, but he would not move; so we blocked up the mouth of the hole with a thorn bush, and dug down into the bank from above, and after three hours' hard work came upon the leopard stone-dead. The shot above the tail must have penetrated to the vitals, and perhaps the smoke helped to suffocate him.

There were some wolves in this part of the country, and a small pack killed a couple of old women not far from Jalna. Two seized a goat one morning and pulled it in half between them and devoured it, all in a few minutes. I saw them making across country about a mile away, and by sprinting a thousand yards I cut them off and killed one with a good shot with my rook rifle. There were also many hyenas, which we did not usually molest. But I put one out of a patch of jungle one morning and speared it after a long run. I shot another with a charge of small shot when it came out during a beat for pea-fowl. These striped hyenas are cowardly animals; they are found also in Africa, where it is said that they are often bi-sexual. But it seems likely that this is a native superstition, and I have never heard this in India.

At most places in India I saw few snakes, particularly poisonous ones. But at Jalna the deadly Russell's viper,

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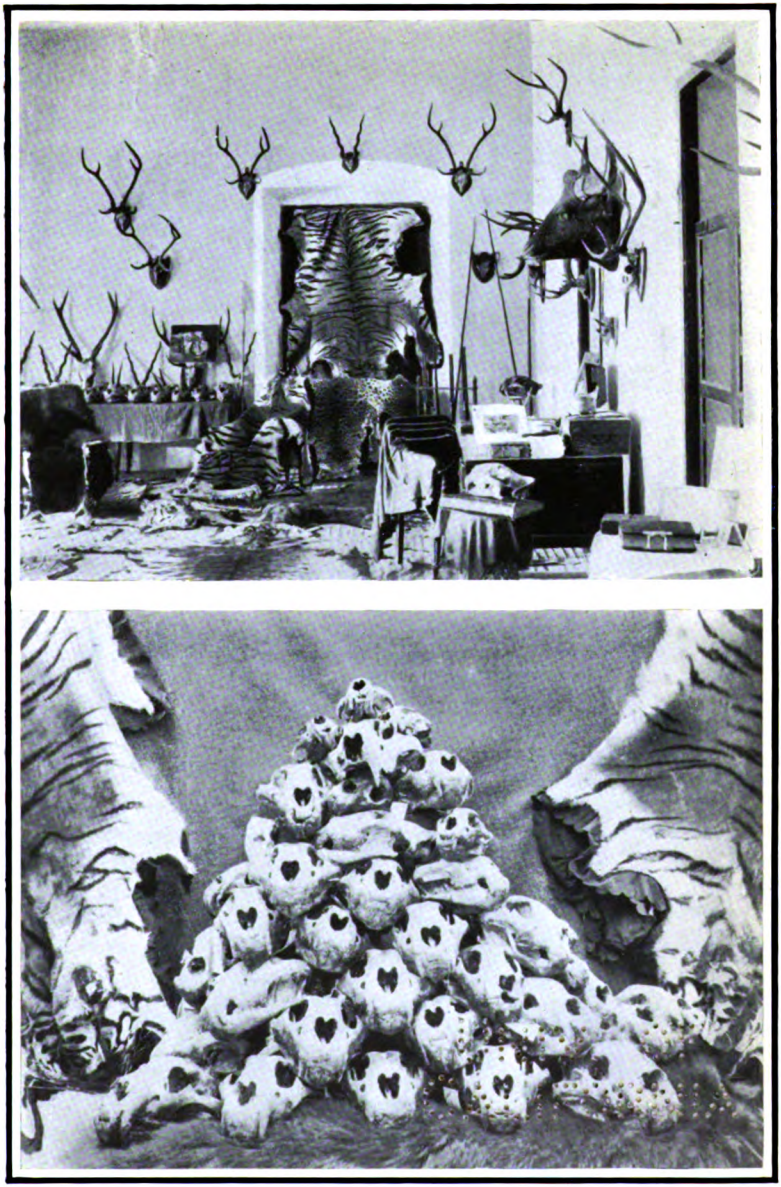

THE HUNTER'S HOME

Here in the author's library at Jalna are skins, skulls, and horns of most of the game animals of the Deccan.

A GOLGOTHA OF TIGER SKULLS

The skulls of some tigers killed by the author and now in the Museum of the Bombay Natural History Society.

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or daboia, was especially abundant, both in the cantonment and the surrounding country. Government statistics show that some twenty thousand people are killed each year by snake-bite, yet it is singular how seldom one comes across specific cases of such deaths. I heard of not more than half-a-dozen instances of Europeans being bitten during my residence in India, and probably not more than a dozen of natives.

Europeans are less likely to be victims, owing to the wearing of suitable boots and leg coverings, and the snake is as timid and elusive as other animals, making off on hearing the approach of man. The natives for the most part walk barefooted, and therefore silently, while they live much in darkness, and rank undergrowth springs right up to the threshold of their huts in country villages, so that they tread in the dusk of early morning or evening in places where snakes are likely to lie.

At Jalna, and elsewhere also, the European's way is lighted by a hand-lantern when he goes on foot. I was out shooting one day when my dog ran round and round a bush, barking excitedly. Suddenly a great viper rolled out and almost got hold of the dog; it lay coiled up, with its evil-looking head raised, hissing furiously, the forked tongue darting and quivering, until shot. Then one night I was going to bed and stepped barefooted from one room into another through an open doorway where a curtain hung to the ground. I passed twice through the doorway, and as I pulled aside the curtain heard a continuous hiss, like an escape of gas. Looking down I saw that I had stepped twice within a few inches of a Russell's viper, which was lying in the doorway. On another occasion the skin of a krait, a very deadly snake, was found in the early morning on the small

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tea-table by my bed, where its late owner had shed it during the night.

I have not seen recent statistics of deaths in India from snake-bite, but the mortality increased from over seventeen thousand in 1880 to more than twenty-four thousand in 1911. The apparent increase may be due in part to more efficient recording; but there was a steady growth in the annual figures.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Some Nature Notes

"Science writes of the world as if with the cold finger of a star-fish."—R. L. STEVENSON.

THE Indian hunter has not the unrivalled opportunities of his African comrade for the observation of wild life. In India there are none of those vast expanses, teeming with animal life and but seldom trodden by civilised man, which are still to be found in the interior of Africa. No sportsman has in India had the experiences of Gordon Cumming, William Cotton Oswell, Samuel Baker or Selous. Neither the climatic conditions nor the habitat of the game permits of prolonged excursions, and one cannot in India hunt all the year round. Still the sportsman who has wandered far afield has, in the past forty years, been able to find abundance of animals. The British officer has perhaps less opportunity for obtaining sport than he had twenty or thirty years ago. Remote cantonments have been abandoned; irksome but necessary restrictions with regard to shooting have been introduced; native states that once afforded free hunting grounds have been closed; with the spread of communications and Western civilisation population has increased, cultivation has spread and pushed the wild animals into remoter fastnesses, where there still remains sufficient forest for their wanderings. Perhaps worst of all, native poachers have been able to obtain better weapons and work greater destruction. The perfection of firearms also has had

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its influence in other directions. The hunter of the days of the old forest ranger had to approach close to his game before his muzzle-loader could be effective; the pursuit of wary animals called for the exercise of more skill and knowledge of woodcraft than in these days of the long-ranging rifle.

There is still, however, abundance of game for those who have the leisure and the enterprise to look for it.

In the plains of India the immense herds of antelope which were to be seen forty years ago are not now to be found. Jerdon mentions seeing herds of a thousand near Jalna. This would have been eighty years ago. In the same neighbourhood thirty years back I never saw large herds. I shall never forget a scene in a forest glade on the Pein Gunga in 1895. I followed on the tracks of a tiger up the bed of a watercourse having a pool here and there where the great beast and other animals had stopped to drink. After some miles the watercourse traversed an open space, where a forest bungalow stood amid a grove of trees. The sun had not long risen, and the foliage of the trees and the slender fronds of the bamboos cast long shadows across the glade. Here stood three or four herds of spotted deer, some browsing on the grass, some standing on their hind legs to pluck the young shoots from the bamboos; a herd of nilgai was on the bank of the watercourse; a pair of four-horned antelope were feeding beneath a banyan-tree; monkeys, with grey-fringed black faces, were clinging to the trees; pea-fowl in numbers were not far from a pool in the nullah; two wild dogs, which should surely have caused the disappearance of all this game, stood unconcernedly in the middle of the glen; there were before me tracks of a tiger and a leopard; and a bear, climbing in search

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of honey, had scored deep marks with his claws on the bole of a tree; farther up on the hillside a sambar belled loudly; perhaps the tiger, which was not far ahead, had passed that way. For some time, from concealment in the watercourse, I watched this scene with interest. It was a pity to disturb it, but I wished to find where the tiger had gone. As I emerged into the glade a cow bison with two calves appeared on the edge of the forest; the nearest hinds, whose dappled hides assimilated remarkably with their surroundings of sunlight and shade, uttered their shrill barks of alarm, and soon all disappeared like spectres in the shades of the forest.

I have referred elsewhere to the protection afforded by a spotted coloration. Wallace ascribes to protective coloration the purpose of "concealing herbivorous species from their enemies, and enabling carnivorous animals to approach their prey unperceived." For coloration to afford protection necessitates the absence of motion. I have seen a hitherto invisible bison betrayed by the flicking of the ears. I am inclined to believe that coloration is far more due to environment — to the colour of the surroundings and to climatic causes—than to sexual selection for protective purposes. It is noticeable how animals become assimilated to the general colour of the surroundings from which they take their complexion as the Arctic animals turn white in winter. In the case of fishes this adaptation takes place very rapidly: in Norway I have caught blue-coloured trout where the blue glacier water runs in, and black ones from dark holes among the rocks, and bright silvery fish in more open water. They are concealed from enemies above by assimilation to the surroundings, and their white bellies protect them when viewed from

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below. The lower animals, in fact, appear to adapt themselves rapidly to the colour of their environment. And there are the Atlantic sea-horses, which are pale yellow by day and turn black at night. This is typical of changes due to environment throughout the animal world, although the mammalia do not change colour rapidly. But a species haunting dark thickets or sombre woods take on a darker hue than those of the kind inhabiting more open country. Food, temperature and moisture also are contributing factors in coloration. We see so many shades of difference in coloration between individuals of one species, and even in one herd, that sub-specific distinctions based on such differences must be entirely fallacious. It is interesting to note that the lower animals and birds undergo greater change during the breeding season than mammalia. But I believe some antelope change colour considerably, and the black buck's coat becomes blacker at such times.

With regard to protective coloration, Mr Selous pertinently observed that well-known naturalists appear to assume that both carnivorous and herbivorous animals trust entirely to their sense of sight, the former to find their prey and the latter to avoid the approach of enemies. I have given elsewhere reasons for concluding that in India at any rate the great Felidæ do not hunt by scent. The African hunter remarks that lions prey largely on buffaloes, but little on giraffes; so if coloration is for protective purposes the buffalo surely has more need of protection. Yet the coloration of the giraffe is protective, whether in the dusk or when feeding on the mimosa, while the buffalo is protected not by coloration but rather by its formidable character.

The cheetah or hunting-leopard certainly hunts

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entirely by sight. In captivity it is hooded and driven on a bullock-cart as near as possible to a herd of antelope. I have observed, when sitting on the same cart with the animal, that until unhooded it displays no knowledge of the proximity of the game. On the leathern hood being removed, the cheetah looks round, sees the herd moving, and at once leaps down from the cart and makes a rush from a distance of probably forty or fifty yards. It pursues by sight when the herd bolts.

Bears have a very keen sense of smell, and on the hill-sides of Kashmir I have found it impossible to approach a brown bear with the wind. On one occasion I began to stalk a bear feeding in the open at a distance of five or six hundred yards. When I was still four hundred yards off the breeze carried my scent to him; he raised his head, sniffed the tainted air, and made off as fast as he could. Bears have very inferior powers of vision, and one may get close up to them stalking against the wind, so they have all the more need of the sense of smell.

There is a tendency to separate species into numerous local races or sub-species, frequently on slender grounds. Thus the lion has been divided recently into seven races, distinctions being generally based on the colour and extent of the mane, although such differences are found among animals in one district, and even in one family. Tigers have not been so separated, except that the Manchurian and Persian ones are distinguished by the texture of the fur, which is referable to climate, and by size, which varies among the race even in one locality. The Indian and European wolf are separated for the same reason, but they blend indistinguishably in North-Western India. The Baluchistan gazelle has been

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accorded sub-specific status on the evidence of one female head, owing to the horns being ringed and the dark portions of the face dark brown instead of rufous. But the horns of the female gazelle in the Deccan are distinctly annulated, and in one herd animals are seen with both dark brown and rufous faces. The male is said to have horns more lyrate and more curved backwards; but in these respects the Deccan gazelle shows both characters.

There are still some questions to be settled with regard to the drinking habits of wild animals. In Dr Lydekker's *Great and Small Game of India* it is said of the Indian antelope: "Whether it ever drinks is a matter on which there is a difference of opinion, but that it can exist without taking liquid seems demonstrated by the occurrence of a herd on a narrow spit of land between the Chilka Salt Lake in Orissa and the sea, where for thirty miles the only fresh water obtainable is derived from wells." In the same work we read of the gazelle: "It is believed by some observers never to drink, being often found during the hot seasons where there is no water except in deep wells. Even in places where water is found, Dr Blanford states that he never saw the footprints of gazelles among those of animals that came to drink at the pools."

Of the sambar we are told: "Whether they require water every day is still a question; but it is well known that they are frequently in the habit of travelling long distances in search of that element." Then it is said: "Nilgai can exist with but a small supply of water, and it is probable that, in the cold season at least, they drink only every second or third day, and that they could go for a considerably longer period without liquid."

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My own observations lead to the belief that all animals drink once in twenty-four hours at least, *where they are able to obtain water*. At the same time my experience has been almost entirely limited to the Deccan plateau, where water is generally obtainable, even in the hot weather, when animals commonly congregate in the vicinity. Sometimes they travel great distances to drink, especially in Africa, and in some cases the place of water is supplied by bulbous roots, gourds and fleshy plants which hold a considerable supply. In Somaliland there is the aloe, known as dar, on the thick juicy leaves of which the black rhinoceros and other animals browse, as do the kudu and oryx in the Kalahari desert. The place of these plants may be taken in parts of India, such as Bikanir and Jodhpur, by the flowers of the *Ak*, which contain some moisture.

An interesting experiment was carried out in 1910 in Somaliland, when five maritime gazelles (*Gazella pelzelni*) were placed on the small island of Saad-ud-din, which is waterless except for an occasional shower. The case was reported in *The Field* of 25th November 1911, where it is stated that the gazelle were flourishing in that month, that the absence of tracks showed that they had not drunk salt water, and that they had obtained moisture from a succulent plant, the bulbs of which they scrape out with their hoofs and eat.

But in the Deccan at any rate both antelope and gazelle drink daily. I have seen the antelope trooping down to the water to drink, and have observed them in the act of drinking, while a photograph taken in Rajputana shows a herd at water. There can therefore be no question that these animals do drink. With regard to the chikara, or Indian gazelle, Dr Blanford's

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observations may have been faulty, or may relate to a part of the country where these animals have developed peculiar habits. I have seen them in the act of drinking, and numbers go down to water in the middle of the day in the hot weather. In fact the naturalist was less accurate than the poet who wrote:

> "The wild gazelle on Judah's hills
> Exulting yet may bound;
> And drink from all the sacred rills
> That gush on holy ground."

On the shores of the Chilka Lake there are hollows in the plain where water is constantly standing during several months of the year, and particularly the months from April to November, when there are frequent showers of rain. There are also pools, called by the natives *dibbula*, among the sand-hills and all along the coast, close to the sea. Besides such sources of supply there are paddy (rice) fields containing water, and there is nothing to prevent the herds migrating fifty miles up the coast to Puri in seasons of drought. There is no reason why the antelope should not swim across to the mainland to drink, as do the spotted deer on the Chilka islands. There is fresh water in wells, and this is drawn and sent down irrigation channels to supply the crops. Moreover, the antelope at the southern end of the Chilka Lake would find water in the hills, where there are bears, leopards and other animals perhaps even more impatient of thirst.

An observant naturalist and sportsman, the late Major Rodon, told me that he had made special inquiries with regard to the drinking habits of antelope and gazelle in Bikanir and Jodhpur. There the heat

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is terrific during the hot weather; in Bikanir water is obtainable only from deep wells, as it is in most parts of Jodhpur. He was informed by both Europeans and natives that when all the tanks are dried up, during the hot weather, herds of antelope and gazelle regularly attend the cattle drinking troughs in the evening, just as I found them doing during drought near Jalna. In some places in Jodhpur people fill troughs in the jungle away from villages for the antelope, just as we water wild birds in England. In addition, antelope and gazelle eat largely of the flowers of the *Ak*. Major Rodon said that antelope maddened by thirst had been known to jump down village wells; and he added that, although it was generally held that they could exist a few days without water, they would soon die during great heat.

With regard to the other animals mentioned, I have known sambar drink daily in the Melghat forest in Berar; and certainly the nilgai drinks daily in the Deccan, even during the cold weather. In the cold season of 1899-1900 I encamped where there were very few of these animals. There were, in fact, only one herd and a solitary blue bull, and no more, for I knew the country well. The season was one of drought, all the water in the jungle being dried up, and the only water obtainable was in irrigation channels and troughs near the village. To these sources of supply the nilgai and other animals resorted nightly. In the hot weather I have seen a herd of nilgai pass my camp on their way to drink on several successive days during the heat of the day.

There can, then, be no doubt that all the animals in question drink. Whether the Indian antelope and

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gazelle can go without drinking, like the antelope of the Kalahari desert, is another question. The animals of the waterless regions of Africa apparently have adapted themselves to their environment, and are able to abstain from water for considerable periods. It would be interesting to know whether there are in India any waterless regions in which the species referred to have so adapted themselves to their environment that they can live for a prolonged period without water. There is as yet no conclusive evidence on this point. The question exercised the minds of the ancients, for Strabo said of the Scythian antelope: "It draws through its nostrils a great quantity of water, which is retained in its head, and serves to supply it with moisture for many days in the desert."

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The Nallamallai Hills

"The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

WORDSWORTH.

THAT part of the Eastern Ghauts known as the Nallamallai Hills lies something over a hundred miles to the south-east of Hyderabad, to which state it at one time belonged; it was ceded by the Nizam to the British Government, with other territory, for the maintenance of the Hyderabad subsidiary force. I was induced to visit this region by the perusal of my father's journal, kept when he was stationed with a detachment of his regiment at Cumbum (Kamam), over sixty years before. Cumbum was abandoned as a military station in 1849, and it was not until 1913 that my brother Robert and I visited it on our way to the Nallamallais, which were not far distant.

Cumbum is situated in a wonderfully rich valley, irrigated from an artificially formed lake of great extent. The troops used to be quartered in a fort which has now gone, and the graveyard contains memorials of officers who died a hundred and twenty years before. Two worthy Indian officials who came to visit us told us that the dam which holds the lake was built six hundred years before, at the instance of the wife of a Raja who was passing through the place on a long journey or pilgrimage. But the story has varied from time to time; for in the journal to which I have referred

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it is related that there was a tradition that it was built by two brothers, and that an evil spirit caused a break in the anicut or embankment while it was being built. At last one of the brothers was told in a dream that the only way to propitiate the spirit was to sacrifice himself. He accordingly made it known that he would allow himself to be built up in the anicut, and this was done amid the plaudits and tears of the multitude assembled to witness his self-immolation, with the result that the embankment stands firm to this day.

There was a fine view from the embankment of the lake, which was twenty miles round; but although it was the season for wildfowl there were few duck on the water—only a pack of tufted pochards, which kept out of shot, and some gadwalls and pochards, of which we got a few. We did not attempt fishing, but the old journal tells us of fine perrun and other fish, and of one as big as a man being prodded to death by sepoys' bayonets in the river-bed. From a view of the distant jungle-clad hills and picturesque bays and promontories it is not difficult to understand that detachment duty in this station was in old days considered a pleasant interlude in the service. It is recorded that over seventy years ago there was a man-eating tiger infesting these hills, having, as traditional man-eating tigers should, very little hair on its body.

The train took us through many a rich and beautiful valley and many a stony waste, where antelope and gazelle were to be seen on the hills. On the afternoon of the second day we entered the Nallamallais, where the railway had been driven through rocky ravines, across watercourses, and tunnelled through mountains, whilst dense forest stretched on either side. In the

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evening we arrived at our rail-head, a station in the middle of the forest, where we left the train and put up for the night at the forest hut, the furniture of which consisted of a table and two chairs, so we slept on the floor, as our kit had gone on ahead. The stationmaster told us that he lived in terror of a tiger which patrolled the line on one side and a panther which behaved in like manner on the other.

The country certainly abounded in wild life. It was from here that an Indian forest ranger dispatched a report, composed in a situation of considerable discomfort, in which he began: "Up a tree, where I adhere with much pain and discomposure while big tiger roaring in a very awful manner on the fire-line. This is two times he spoiled my work, coming and shouting like thunder and putting me up a tree, and making me behave like insect. I am not able to climb with agility owing to stomach being a little big owing to bad water of this jungle. Jungle-mans can fly up quickly. Even when I do not see this tiger and he does not make a dreadful noise I see the marks of his hoofs and his nails on the path."

Early next morning we marched by a forest road five or six miles to the place where our camp was pitched in a pleasant glade near a running stream. Although no game was seen on the way there were tracks of a tigress, a panther, a hyena, porcupines, and a few sambar and four-horned antelope. At one point an immense serpent had crawled across the dusty path. Here was an assemblage of aboriginal Chenchus, a people of dwarfed and stunted growth, with a simian cast of countenance, and evidently in a state of primitive development; their scanty clothing consisted in a depending rag resembling

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a tail, which added to their monkey-like appearance. A few of these "highlanders" were better dressed in a scanty "kilt" worn fore and aft, and having no sides, made of a black-and-white check "tartan," indicating their "clan"! One of them showed me the marks on his shoulder where he had been seized by a man-eating leopard when he was asleep in the night ten years before. The climate was very hot, even at the end of December, and the jungle was exceedingly dense, although the leaves had begun to fall.

It was still dark when we went out next morning, and before daylight I turned off the forest road into a dense bamboo jungle, where two hind sambar showed themselves. Later on I viewed a black bear grubbing about on the top of a lofty and somewhat precipitous hill, amid grass and bush, two hundred yards off. I fired a couple of shots and the bear disappeared in the dense cover, having shown no sign of being wounded. Climbing the hillside we reached some rocks above the place where he was last seen, and found the bear lying under a small tree in long grass. He was quite dead. This was a very old male, with a poor coat and much-worn teeth. We rolled the carcass downhill five or six hundred feet, and there skinned him, after which his bare body looked for all the world like an old man. I saw few indications of the presence of bears, and the Chenchus said they were scarce. But in the journal previously mentioned there are several records of bears in the forties of the last century. One of these severely mauled an officer of the Cumbum detachment. He had fired at it and broken the lower jaw, whereupon the bear charged and got his head in its mouth, scoring his scalp down as if it had been gone over by a garden rake, but, owing to the broken jaw,

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A WILD DOG

The Red Dog is a destructive pest, hunting in packs, harrying in the jungles, destroying or driving away deer and other game, and even attacking the tiger and leopard and depriving them of their prey.

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unable to bite him or take a proper grip of his head. The man got away from the bear, and, thinking himself mortally wounded, picked up his gun, rushed at the wounded animal and finished it with the second barrel, which was still loaded. However, the officer recovered after a long illness complicated with erysipelas.

It is a mistake to suppose that bears commonly hug their victims. When charging they sometimes rise up on their hind legs at close approach, and thus offer the vital spot, indicated by the white "horseshoe," as an excellent mark. They generally appear to attack the head with tooth and claw. My brother, Colonel R. W. Burton, was seized by the head, and his jaw broken and one eye almost gouged out; his leg also was bitten. I have seen a native with his scalp clawed by a bear and hanging down over his face like a veil.

After reaching the camp, shortly before noon, I found my companion had shot a large, heavy-bodied stag with poor antlers, the only one he saw, although there were plenty of hinds. The sambar in these hills do not carry good trophies, and are scarcely worth shooting for their heads. In the evening we saw some spotted deer, including a stag, but did not get a shot. There was little game in the immediate vicinity of this camp. A few painted partridges, jungle fowl and spur-fowl comprised the birds. The spur-fowl, little brown birds with two sharp spurs on each red leg, were most cunning of all, and excellent for the table. But there were plenty of green fruit-pigeons—everywhere plentiful in the Deccan, both in the great forests and in suitable spots in station and cantonment. These fine birds are difficult to see when feeding in the leafy tops of banyan and other trees. But they are betrayed by their soft whistling note, whose sweet and

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mellow tones add to the music of the tree-tops, where the yellow and green plumage, shaded into violet-grey, harmonises so well with the tints of the foliage. They fly very rapidly when disturbed; and I recollect, when on the march with my regiment, how four barrels fired into a flock of seven or eight birds brought them all down; they seemed to fly into the shot.

We moved camp next morning to Bandla Penta, farther in the interior of the forest, making a long detour one on either side of the road. I started at daybreak and made a long round over the hills. My jungle-men were not as sharp-eyed as I expected; I spotted a hind on a hillside, and they did not see it until I pointed it out to them. We walked towards it, and a stag got up and belled, and then they both ran up the hill into dense forest. We went on, and another stag belled, but was not viewed. Then I saw the horns of a fine stag showing above the long grass and thick bush; it was moving, and I might have chanced a shot, but I waited for a better opportunity, which never came. The game was very wild, no doubt being much hunted by the aboriginals.

I saw tracks of wild dogs, which may have made the animals more wary, as I have found on many occasions. These animals were numerous in the hills sixty years before. A party of sportsmen were asleep in their tents when they were awakened with a strong cry ringing in their ears. General E. F. Burton wrote: "We seized our guns and ran out, and saw that all the shikaris were on all-fours at the door of their shanty, which they had built of boughs, each peering over his neighbour's shoulder. The oldest man, Buswapah, a grizzled, cunning old woodsman and hunter, crept out. We said: 'Buswapah, what is it?' He gave no answer, but wagged his grey pow in a

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mysterious manner, shouldered his axe and led the way across an open space three hundred yards wide. When we had advanced a hundred yards into the clearing we saw, by the light of the moon, something lying on the sward. Cautiously approaching, we found it to be a half-grown sambar, stone-dead. At the same moment another sambar belled loudly close to us, and we discerned two shadowy forms standing close to the edge of the clearing. One of my friends immediately fired, and missed. We then turned to the dead sambar; it was not wounded, but its throat and armpit were covered with slaver. The old shikari said that we had heard its death-shriek when pulled down by wild dogs, which had not had time to break it up, but had strangled it and bolted when we came on the scene." This is an interesting addition to wild-dog lore. These animals are generally supposed to pull down their prey by snapping at and tearing open the stomach and intestines. On another occasion the writer of the journal found that a pack of wild dogs were pursuing a wounded bear. I have previously referred to the fact that these animals are known to attack leopards, and even the tiger itself.

There was a small stream running through this part of the forest, and next morning I followed it a long way to its source. I then climbed some high hills, which was hard work in that trying climate. It was the 1st of January, but the New Year brought no luck. A herd of six or eight sambar, among which was a small stag, showed themselves, but the stag did not offer a shot. In the evening we went to look for the big Malabar squirrels, fine animals as big as rabbits, with beautiful chestnut and yellow fur and black tails. There were plenty of them in the larger trees, where they had constructed their nests

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of leaves in the higher branches. When disturbed they at once took refuge in the nests, and could be dislodged only by sending a man up the tree. They were then not easy to shoot, for they ran very fast along the branches, keeping on the far side, where they were mostly hidden from view, or lying concealed and motionless. We shot two or three specimens and did not further molest them. The longest one was thirty-four inches in length, of which the tail was seventeen inches.

Stalking was rendered difficult in this forest by the dry leaves with which the ground was strewn, making it impossible to walk in silence. Dry leaves underfoot make a noise which in the depths of the forest sounds almost thunderous, and even a lizard or a small bird can be heard stirring among the leaves. We went a long round on our last day, visiting the hill where I shot the bear, and came upon a stag and two hind spotted deer. I hit the stag, which seemed but slightly hurt, as there were only a few drops of blood, and it went off at score and could not be found, although we followed the tracks as far as possible. We varied the sport with some fly-fishing in the stream, and caught a number of fish, including some chilwa and three or four small carp and a murrell, the latter a very voracious fish which grows to a large size. I once saw a fair-sized snake cut out of a murrell; and on one occasion, at Hingoli, when a snipe which I had shot fell into the lake, it was seized and taken off in a moment by one of these fish. I afterwards tried to catch the murrell on a hook baited with a small dead bird, but it was too cunning to take the bait.

We tried in vain to get on terms with a tigress whose tracks we saw on the road, but were unable to mark it down. On another visit to this forest my brother was

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sitting in ambush over a somewhat "high" carcass of an animal killed by a tiger, when a large hawk began to pull at the stomach of the kill. Suddenly he perforated it and was blown up by the escaping gas. The tiger did not come to the kill, but was shot in a beat the following day. Although the Nallamallai Hills did not yield much sport the trip was interesting, because it involved a visit to old haunts ranged by a member of our family more than sixty years before, and the experiences of days recorded in the old journal could be compared with those of more modern times.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Wolf-Children

"Man-Pack and Wolf-Pack have cast me out."
THE JUNGLE BOOK.

FROM remote antiquity wolves have been the subject of strange superstitions and legends. Tales of werewolves and of wolf-children have been prevalent in all countries. But the "were" animal is not always a wolf. It tends to be the principal carnivorous animal—in Russia and Southern and Western Europe, a wolf; in Northern Europe, a bear; in Africa, a hyena or a leopard; and in the East, a tiger or leopard. In Palestine it is believed that the hyena possesses hypnotic powers, and will cast a spell over the solitary wayfarer. In the Deccan it is supposed that the spirit of the man-eater's last victim accompanies the monster and warns it of the proximity of danger. The Gond "werewolf" is a man-eating leopard which assumes human form at will, like the werewolf in Eastern Europe and in France. Old writers aver that the werewolf had no tail, as would be expected; this was said of the wild beast in Russia and the leopard, of whose evil career some account has been given before.

In an earlier chapter mention has been made of superstitions connected with wild animals, and there is perhaps no animal with regard to which these are more prevalent than the wolf, whether it be a question of *loups-garous* or werewolves, or of children reputed to have been brought up by these animals.

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The subject of wolf-children has been brought before the public again recently, an article which I contributed to *The Times* in April 1927 having given rise to much correspondence. The occasion was the finding of a small boy alleged to have been living in a wolf's den near Allahabad, but there was in this instance no suggestion that the child had been suckled by wolves, like Mowgli of *The Jungle Book*. Some people believe that the legend of Romulus and Remus may have been founded on fact, and several reputed cases in Oudh in recent times have obtained a wide credence. These have not been confined to India. Shakespeare refers to them in *A Winter's Tale*, where Antigonus conjures the spirits to instruct the kites and ravens to nurture the babe:

> "Wolves and bears, they say,
> Casting their savageness aside, have done
> Like offices of pity."

Tradition in the pages of Firdausi relates that the son of a Persian general was exposed on Mount Elburz and brought up by birds of prey; and we read of a Phrygian boy being nourished by an eagle. Semiramis, the founder of the Assyrian Empire of Nineveh, was said to have been fed by doves—a story that has a Biblical flavour.

It is not surprising that in parts of the country where wolves are numerous and destructive, myths should arise as to their stealing and nurturing children. In Oudh, in particular, wolves have always been destructive of human life, carrying off children where these are exposed by the mode of life of the people. The fact that such stories are generally confined to one province supports the view that they are based on local superstition. There have been several notices of the wolf-children of

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Oudh. Among these are the investigations carried out by Sir William Sleeman, as recorded in his book, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh*. Valentine Ball deals with the subject in his *Jungle Life in India*, and his paper in *The Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1873, furnished the basis of Professor Max Müller's article in *The Academy* for that year. A notice by the late Sir Roderick Murchison, consisting of an extract from the journal of Captain the Hon. F. Egerton, appeared in *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History* in 1851. But this was mainly a *résumé* of Sir William Sleeman's views and evidence. Sir William Sleeman also was the author of a pamphlet printed at Plymouth in 1852, entitled *An Account of Wolves Nurturing Children in their Dens*.

In a typical instance, a wolf-boy (they are nearly always males) was once said, in 1847, to have been dug out of a den with a large she-wolf, into which they were seen to retreat. The boy went on all-fours; he would eat only raw meat, and he was an idiot, as all reputed wolf-children, except the mythical Romulus and Remus, have been. This boy was kept for a time by the Raja of Hasnapur, and afterwards by Captain Nicholetts at Sultanpur, until August 1850, when he died.

Several wolf-boys have been kept at the Sikandra Orphanage at Agra, where Ball saw one in 1874. He had then been nine years at the institution, and was supposed to be about fifteen years of age. Ball mentions the shortness of his arms—only about nineteen inches in length—as being due to arrested growth when he was going about on all-fours. This was probably one of the children described in the report of the Orphanage for 1872, written by Mr Erhardt, the Superintendent.

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The report says that "among the new-comers during the past year was that unfortunate boy who had been burned out of a wolf's den and who caused so much interest and inquiry. He came to us from Mynpoorie. He had been found in a wolf's den. A fire had been lighted to drive the young wolves out, and with them came out this little boy. He was about eight years old, and deaf and dumb. He much enjoyed raw meat, and did not walk unless led. He was a very nice-looking boy, and fair. The poor boy was never happy among us. Whether he was homesick after his former quarters and friends, or whether he had some internal complaint, we never could find out. Neither did he improve in any way. He kept living in dark places, uttered now and then a half-smothered whine, tore up his clothes and blanket, till he fell ill in July.

"This one was called 'Wednesday,' after the day on which he came; the previous comer was similarly called 'Saturday,' and had been at the Orphanage some years. When 'Wednesday' fell ill, 'Saturday' was his friend to the last. Whenever he saw anyone coming towards their room he shook his hand and pointed to the poor sick comrade. 'Wednesday' refused all nourishment, and died. 'Saturday' improved, and imitated more and more what he saw others do, and if anyone joined him in playing at ball or any other kind of game, he made the most unearthly noises out of sheer joy of heart. He seemed to have no memory for anything but eating."

In 1874 Mr Erhardt wrote to Ball that there was "at the madhouse of Lucknow an elderly fellow four years ago who had been dug out of a wolf's den by a European doctor"; but we have neither the name nor

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the evidence of that doctor! Sir John Hewett saw one of the alleged wolf-children at the Orphanage in 1877, and found him still alive between thirty and forty years later, when he must have been from forty to fifty years of age. He was then strongly addicted to tobacco, and never spoke; nor do these unfortunate creatures ever have the power of speech.

Sir William Sleeman investigated several cases, of whose capture circumstantial details were given. In one of these some of the King of Oudh's troopers were said to have captured three wolf cubs on the bank of the Gumti, where the animals were drinking; one was a boy. He ran on all-fours, had callosities on his knees and elbows, and lived for some time afterwards at Lucknow. This appears to be the one mentioned to Ball by Mr Erhardt.

In Captain Egerton's journal there is the story of "a boy who could never get rid of a strong wolfish smell, and who was seen, not long after his capture, to be visited by three wolves, which evidently came with hostile intentions, but which, after closely examining him, he seeming not the least alarmed, played with him, and some nights afterwards brought their relations, making the number of visitors amount to five, the number the litter from which he had been taken was composed of. I think Colonel Sleeman believed this story to be perfectly true, though he could not vouch for it."

Certainly Sir William Sleeman, who was so largely concerned in the suppression of Thugs in India, was accustomed to weigh evidence, and must have possessed a judicial mind. But it is noteworthy that every case of capture of a so-called wolf-child rests on native evidence,

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which is notoriously untrustworthy. The recorded instances of alleged wolf-children are so numerous that it is certainly not possible to accept them all as authentic. The combination of circumstances required to produce a wolf-child is most unlikely to occur.

In the first place the abductor would have to be, in all probability, a she-wolf with sucklings or one who had lost her cub. It can scarcely be held that such an animal would deliberately seek a human infant to replace the loss. She would seize the infant for purposes of food, would have to bear it to her den comparatively uninjured, and there refrain from the natural instinct to kill. The infant also would have to arrive at such destination uninjured, or injured so little as to survive for a time the dangers of life in the den. This is very improbable. Generally children, like other animals so seized, are killed or fatally injured on the spot. The attack of a beast of prey is normally violent, fierce and bloodthirsty, so as to be immediately fatal. The chances of a child being alive and comparatively unhurt on reaching the den are so remote that they are almost negligible. Yet there are numerous instances of these so-called wolf-children. They are too frequent to be credible. Ball relates that he asked an eminent and well-known surgeon, who formerly resided in Oudh, what he thought of these stories, and he said: "I do not believe one of them."

It has been noted that such instances occur almost entirely in the one province of Oudh. Why do they not occur elsewhere? The number of children carried off by wolves is not great enough to provide so many instances of survival. The inference is that while one or two such instances may have occurred in the history

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of the world, it is impossible to believe in so large a number; and the doubt applies to all the cases reported from the province of Oudh, which probably are based on local myth, the children thus found being idiots or others lost or abandoned by their parents, as is commonly the case in times of famine. The "wolf-child" is what one would expect such children to become. Wolves carry off young children. They break up and devour them in the manner in which a couple of these animals may be seen to tear in half and devour a goat in a few moments. The child is not seen again, and myth is likely to grow up round its fate, as it is not often seized in the presence of the parents. In the case of tigers and leopards the remains of the man-eater's victim are generally found, so no such myth is likely to arise.

But it is a curious circumstance that a panther whose cub had been killed was said to have carried off and kept a baby boy in the North Cachar Hills. The panther was then killed, and the child was said to have been recaptured and recognised by its parents, as in some similar cases infants carried off by wolves are said to have been recognised. The boy had been accustomed to run about on all-fours and had callosities on his knees, but in the course of a few years he learned to assume an upright position. When caught he bit and fought with anyone who came near; and he would tear to pieces and devour any fowl that came within reach.

In another instance a child that was supposed to have been brought up by a monkey was caught and taken in to Naini Tal. This was a female, probably eight or nine years old. It was unable to talk, but cried or whimpered. It was proved to be a human child, for it had vaccination scars on both arms, but exposure had

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caused a thick growth of hair on each side of its face and down the spine. The absence of callosities on the hands and knees showed that it had always walked upright. This was in the Himalayas, where the people have a belief that bears will bring up children. There was a similar case reported from South Africa, where a boy was said to have been stolen by baboons from a kraal, and reared by them for some years.

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EPILOGUE

Wild Life in a Cotswold Garden

"But when returned the youth? The youth no more
Returned exulting to his native shore.
But in his place there came a worn-out man."

CRABBE.

THERE is a bamboo patch at the end of the dell in my garden which might afford good cover for a tiger or leopard, and serves to bring to mind many a scene of jungle life. Then in the hall and library are skins and heads, as well as the old rifle that was my companion during so many years. And on a shelf repose the maps, old and stained, with the canvas torn and patched, which I had intended to hang upon the wall, but the days that are no more would arise with such poignant memories that they are better hidden away.

The garden is very favourably situated for the preservation of the wild. Comprising some four acres of flower-garden, rock-garden, orchard and arable, well wooded with a variety of trees and shrubs, and with a perennial stream flowing-through one hundred and fifty yards of its length, it contains all that is favourable to bird and insect life. Nor are mammals absent. We are situated at the foot of a spur of the Cotswold Hills, and an adjacent park has cover for foxes which raid the neighbouring hen-roosts, and for rabbits which have to be wired out of the vegetable garden. We have more than once seen a fox sneaking through the rock-garden.

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Even a badger—an animal not uncommon in the hills, but seldom viewed owing to its nocturnal habits—has been seen. One evening a great noise of yelping dogs was heard, and as the din approached a badger broke from the hedge with two dogs at his heels and fled down the path, disappearing in the brushwood and the gloom, where the hunt was lost to view. The unmistakable tracks of an otter also have been observed in the soft mud beside the stream, no doubt attracted by the trout, which were at one time numerous, but have now dwindled to a scanty few that have survived the washings off the roads higher up the brook. There, too, the water-vole disports himself unmolested, and little shrews and field-mice are not uncommon, while moles have thrown up heaps of mud on the bank. When we are moth-hunting on moonlight nights we often find hedgehogs on the lawns or wandering on the paths in the dell.

The red squirrel has almost disappeared; we seldom see one now. A grey squirrel, of the exotic species introduced from America, with the usual detrimental results, ran across the lawn one morning, but appeared to be travelling, for it was not seen again. Always and everywhere these exotic introductions seem to be followed by ill-results. I recollect that in Jamaica more than forty years ago the mongoose, brought from India to destroy the rats, had in time left the rats alone, but had exterminated the quail and taken to eating sugar-cane. Both rabbits and prickly-pear cactus have been detrimental in Australia, and the grey squirrel is ousting our English one and destroying birds. But the indigenous squirrel is not innocent, for I have known one devour a nest of young bullfinches.

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Some time ago we found two large rats killed during the night near a heap of leaf-mould, each with a bite in the neck, and from a hole ten young ones issued in succession, and were duly knocked on the head when they came to the bodies of their parents. This was the work of a weasel sometimes seen in the garden. The question "Where do wild animals die?" arises in England, as in the East. Beast preys on beast, and how seldom does one find an animal that has died a natural death! The dying creature seeks some secluded spot in which to pass away, and thus dead weasels or their remains may be found in hollow trees by the exploring naturalist. In France the Count de Montlosier found in a great cavern a vast number of skeletons of hares or rabbits, all placed in a nearly similar manner, the bones all perfect, and even the cartilages and portions of hair and flesh not yet perished. He believed it to be their cemetery; but it is more probable that they were the victims of a flood, and that the way in which the remains were placed was due to the action of the water.

The stream is the most important natural feature in the garden, for it favours the presence of many wild things. The trout find shelter in shady and rocky pools and beneath the bridges and the waterfalls near the summer-house, which is gay with ramblers and clematis; and there is a gravel bed where large fish spawn in winter. There are also numerous crayfish, seldom seen except when one lifts a stone or other suitable retreat for these fresh-water lobsters. The absence of eels is curious, and the introduction of elvers from the Severn, up which they swarm in thousands in early spring, did not stock the water. They all disappeared.

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Moor-hens come up-stream from the lake in the park below, and may sometimes be seen on the lawn in the early morning; in the daytime they retire to more secluded haunts, for there is not enough cover for them among our reeds and rushes, which stand cold and shivering in the current and the breeze, waist-deep in water. But there are other water-loving birds. One day a kingfisher flashed like a jewel through the sunlight in the garden and settled for a few moments on the rock above the waterfall, but there was no place for it to nest and rear its young. More than fifty years ago, in the days of our youth, we used to find their nests in the sandy bank of the main stream when on our trout-tickling expeditions. Now they are rarely seen.

But a pair of water-ouzels found a home underneath the waterfall, which flows full in winter and in rainy weather, but in a dry summer drips, a thin and attenuated stream, over the moss-clad rocks. There they built their domed nest, where

"The shadows thin and cool
Fall, and flicker, and pass across the face of the pool."

They had been absent two seasons, and we were glad to see them back again, sharing perches on the rocks with the grey wagtails. Three birds, two cocks recognised by their song, appeared on 6th April. Next day only one cock was seen. He perched on a dry rock on the top of the waterfall and poured forth a melody which the plash of water could not drown; then he flew up-stream and sang again under the ivy-hung archway of the bridge. The song is short and sweet, not unlike that of a thrush, but not so loud. The call-note is short, sharp and piercing. The song finished, the

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ouzel flew down to fetch his mate, who must have been enchanted with his notes. At any rate next day the pair of them were seen on the waterfall; the other suitor had disappeared. Absence from home prevented further observation until 18th April, when we saw from a concealed position one of the ouzels sitting on the rock above the waterfall with a piece of moss in its beak. For ten minutes it bobbed up and down, sometimes dropping the moss and picking it up again. Then the bird suddenly darted below the waterfall and disappeared. On our approaching the spot after a few moments the ouzel came out from beneath the log above the sluice-gate and flew rapidly down-stream. In the place from which it issued, the nest was found in a hole among the rocks, with the water trickling down beside it. It was a large structure of moss, with an overshadowing dome as yet unfinished.

For some days watch was kept from a position behind the ivied bridge. The cock-bird was frequently seen sitting on the wire fence, not far from the nest, preening his feathers, while the hen was engaged in house-building. The hen, when she flew out of the nest, always floated a short distance down-stream before taking wing. She was seen to perch on the moss-covered stump of a tree, tear some moss from it, and fly back to the nest, while the cock sat on the railing. But he sometimes joined in collecting building material, and the two would enter the nest together; while occasionally the hen took a rest on the railing and preened her feathers beside her mate, who never sang in the immediate vicinity of the nest, no doubt from fear of betraying its position. The same activities were observed during several days. Later the hen was engaged in

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bringing grass to bind the doorway of her home, and then, on 22nd April, dry leaves only. The completed structure was a large mass of moss, the entrance low down on the side, bound with dry grass, and the nest lined with dry leaves.

The first egg, white and tapering at one end, was laid on 24th April, and two more were deposited on the two succeeding days. A fourth egg was added late in the afternoon of the 27th—an unusual occurrence, for eggs are generally laid in the early morning. Next day the cock flew to the nest with food in his beak for the sitting hen; loud squeaks were heard, and it was hoped that in due course a brood would be hatched out, and offer opportunities for further observation. But alas! men working in the stream below for several hours made some commotion, and the water-ouzels, taking alarm at this disturbance, deserted the happy home that had been built with so much care and labour.

The same season a pair of great spotted woodpeckers made a nest in a hole in an apple-tree, and were observed with great interest, but were unfortunately ejected by starlings before they could bring up their young. We have all three species of woodpecker in the garden. The green woodpecker—known as the yaffle, from his note—is common, being noisy and constantly seen; the spotted ones are seldom seen, not perhaps so much owing to scarcity, but because they are less conspicuous in voice, plumage and habits. They are shy and retiring, though the greater spotted one will come to the bird-table in winter. The green woodpecker feeds on the lawn, and climbs the Siberian crab-apple tree, whose fruit is so decorative in autumn.

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Other tree-climbers which frequently visit us are the little tree-creeper, whose nest we found behind a piece of bark, and the nuthatch, whose resonant note sounds from the higher branches of the beeches. Nuthatches built a nest in a hole in an oak and plastered the entrance with clay to reduce its size and so perhaps exclude marauders.

At the top of another tree a tawny owl was domiciled, and the solitary offspring used to gaze solemnly down on us from the height. This was perhaps the descendant of a tame one which we had brought up when it was taken quite young from a nest in a distant wood. There were two, named Bubble and Squeak, which were let loose in the garden when able to fly. Bubble came to an untimely end at the hands of a hunting urchin, but for months Squeak used to come flying down from the trees when called, and feed out of the hand, taking either a mouse or a piece of meat. He even invaded the kitchen and stole food from the table when the cook's back was turned, and he would fly in at night and perch on the back of a chair in the schoolroom when his master was preparing his Greek or Latin lesson, as though in observance of his learned reputation. Squeak remained until the coming of spring, when he no doubt found a mate; and often we thought we could distinguish his eerie voice among those of others of his kind in the garden and orchard at night. An owl sitting in the kind of tree these birds frequent blends so wonderfully with its surroundings, both in coloration and form, as to be almost invisible. It looks like part of the tree when sitting motionless, and furnishes an excellent example of protective form and coloration.

But the scarcest summer visitors we have had were a

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pair of hawfinches, which built a small nest in the fork of an apple-tree. These birds, although building in an open place exposed to view, were remarkably shy and retiring, and it was not easy to get a sight of them. The nest was a shallow and rather unfinished-looking structure, resembling that of a neighbouring bullfinch's which was pulled out of a low bush, when full of fledgelings, by a marauding cat. It was made of what looked like the inner bark stripped off a tree, resembling coarse fibre, and was lined with hair and roots. Four young ones were brought up in the month of June. Unfortunately the old hen-bird came to a tragic end; she flew against the wire of the fowl-run and was picked up dead—a fate that has not infrequently overtaken chaffinches and thrushes beaten to death against a window.

Spotted flycatchers nest every year in the ramblers that climb up the side of the house, and they perch on the croquet hoops and dart out now and then to snap up an insect; the snap of the beak on a victim is audible at some distance. The bird catches butterflies and appears to avoid white ones, which are said to be distasteful to all birds, but are eaten with avidity by the tame magpie. The flycatcher arrives about the second week in May. At first it is very unobtrusive, keeping in the shade of large trees and uttering its feeble squeak. When hunting, it always returns to the same perch after each flight. Nest-building is not begun until June. At this time the birds love to sit on the outer boughs of the drooping lime-tree, and chase one another, squeaking vehemently the while. The nest is small and compact, built entirely of moss, bound together with a few dry straws and human hair, and thickly lined

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with hair and feathers. The five eggs are a dull green, blotched with red. Very little is seen of the bird after nidification is over, and it leaves us at the beginning of August.

The pied flycatcher is a much rarer bird, and only one has been seen perched on an old apple-tree. There are numerous black-caps, willow-wrens, chiff-chaffs and other small warblers, the choir invisible, heard among the shrubs and bamboos at the bottom of the dell, where their song mingles with the voice of the stream and the soporific moan of wood-pigeons in the firs and beeches. The golden-crested wren builds its dainty nest each year at the extremity of a branch of a fir-tree, and we have goldfinches, marsh-tits and bramblings. Early in the season, "like a living clock among the trees, the shouting cuckoo strikes the time of year," one with a break in its voice being recognised annually.

Magpies and jackdaws, called "jackdales" by the old keeper, build in the adjacent park, and the former come sometimes and sit in a beech on the lawn to talk to the tame magpie. Jays are commonly supposed to avoid the haunts of man, and they scream harshly at the intruder in their woodland domain. But with us at any rate the birds are not shy. They come down fearlessly to feed from a plate on the lawn close to the house, or join the starlings in picking the bones left by the dog. We were one day invaded by a whole family of jays, including six young ones just escaped from the nest; in half-an-hour they cleared several rows of broad beans, breaking open the pods and devouring the contents. One day a sparrow-hawk chased a thrush into the rock-garden within six feet of me, and was reluctant to be driven off. Kestrels hover on the wind overhead; evil

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croaking carrion-crows try to rob the chicken-yard; sea-gulls and wild geese have been seen or heard passing over, and once a heron stood in the stream in the haunt of grey and pied wagtails.

But while bird life is so plentiful, there is an abundance of insects. Gardens are not the best localities for butterflies, but we have numbers of such scarce species as the Comma and a few of the Duke of Burgundy. There are plenty of the commoner kinds; Speckled Wood butterflies frequently visit us, and most of the Vanessas are to be seen on the blossoms of the Budleia in due season. Tortoiseshells and Brimstones that have hibernated may be seen sunning themselves on a fine day as early as February.

The quantities and species of the Lepidoptera vary greatly in different years. For example, in June 1922, which was exceptionally hot, the Sphingidæ were unusually common in the garden and the surrounding country. This was probably due to the heat of the preceding summer and to the attractive odour of the honeysuckle which twines along under the roof of the verandah and climbs over an old apple-tree on the lawn. For the woodbine it was a great year. The Small Elephant Hawk-moth, generally not a common species, swarmed at the honeysuckle at dusk all through the month, and many were found intoxicated, sometimes to the number of five or six, clinging to the wall in the morning. This species, when captured at night and enclosed in a glass-topped pill-box, always settled down at once and never moved, although its activity as it buzzed against the glass roof of the verandah was remarkable. Some specimens were captured at the honeysuckle on the apple-tree as they hovered and

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probed the depth of the blossoms with their long proboscis. But the combination of light and honey in the verandah seemed more attractive. One specimen was unusual. It was about half the ordinary size, and displayed much more green on the upper wings and less pink than usual, while the black shading extended all over the under wings. Several specimens of the Large Elephant Hawk-moth have been taken at the honeysuckle outside; it seems less ready than the smaller species to enter the verandah. But the giant Privet Hawk-moth has been found in quantities, either fluttering furiously against the glass or hovering at the honeysuckle, or in the morning resting in a state of lethargy. Still more common are the Poplar Hawk-moths, which fly so swiftly at night that it is almost impossible to take them by a stroke of the net, although they are easily captured when resting during the day with their wings underlapping.

But good specimens of the Sphingidæ are best obtained by rearing the larva. Of these we have had many of the species mentioned, as well as of the Eyed Hawk, found on the fruit-trees; one Lime Hawk caterpillar was rescued from a thrush which had been pecking at it for some moments; yet it was uninjured—an indication of a very tough skin.

In the heat of summer we captured four specimens of the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth as they hovered over the ragged-robin on the rough bank where the bugles blow and where there is abundance of viper's bugloss. The same place yielded some specimens of the Forester in their garb of green, where they flitted among the thistles. Unlike most species, the male is larger than the female. Higher up the slope, where the

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yellow rockrose flowers, were countless numbers of the much rarer Cistus Forester, a smaller species, with wings of a metallic green. All the specimens taken when flying over the short grass and rockrose were males; the grass has to be searched for females, which are very sluggish, and take wing only when disturbed.

It is not possible to detail here all of even the rarer nocturnal moths which have been captured in the garden. The Golden Plusia, found in numbers buzzing round the delphiniums, deserves mention, for it was first discovered in England only in 1890. We have also taken Esmeralda, the silver variety of this moth. Then caterpillars are always sought for and carefully tended. A brood of Oak Eggars, reared from the egg, has been fed on privet and brought safely through the winter, pupating in February and the moths emerging in April; while the Emperor-moth passed the winter in the pupal state. But hitherto we have had no success in rearing the Fox-moth. The larva cannot be fed through winter, for there is no food plant. In nature they hibernate in larval form and pupate in spring. We brought one alive through winter in a flower-pot in the garden, but it died in March. A fact worth noticing is that in 1922 the second brood of both moths and butterflies was larger, better coloured and more numerous than the first brood. Perhaps this is the case in all or most years, and it would be worth while to take observations.

There are still many things to be observed in the life-history of the Lepidoptera. Why, for example, do we find two entirely different varieties of the Miller-moth caterpillar feeding on the same sallow-bush? They were in close proximity, as though of one brood; yet of five

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specimens four were of a beautiful pale green colour, with long silky white hairs as soft as thistledown, while the fifth was a golden yellow, and the silky hair was pale yellow, with a few black hairs behind the head. This caterpillar is remarkable, for the silky down, instead of standing straight up, floats down all round, on one side growing forwards and on the other backwards. When the creature crawls the hair undulates like a June meadow swept by the wind. A few days before pupating the colour changed to dingy brown, and the hairs, except the tips, turned black and lost their silky texture and flowing growth, rising straight up from the body.

While much is to be found in the garden, we sometimes wander far afield and find rest and refreshment at a wayside inn. And one day I saw in an inn an old soldier whom I recognised at a glance. He was sitting at the table over a pot of beer, and he knew me for a soldier too, for he got up and saluted. He was a man of sixty or more, weather-beaten and grizzled. I asked what was his regiment, and he replied that he was an old artilleryman and had served in Afghanistan under Roberts. He had left India many years ago, and was now, or had been, a gamekeeper; yet no doubt the past all came back to him in memory, galloping up the path of time, for his speech now savoured of the barrack-room, and was interspersed with Hindustani words. The East has a mysterious attraction even for those who can have experienced little else but hardship and discomfort. He did not "shoulder his crutch and show how fields were won," for he was sound of limb, though for the moment somewhat unsteady on his feet. But often, he said, he dreamt of bygone days, when his guns thundered along

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MAP
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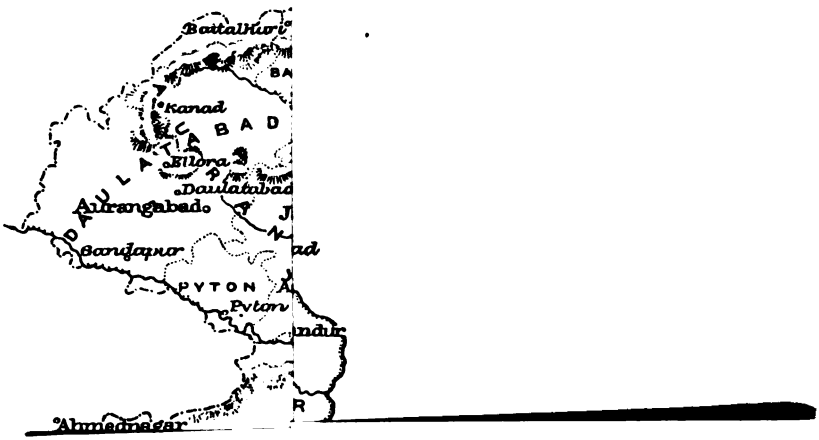
1 inch = 48 miles
40 60 80 100 miles



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the road on the way to Kandahar. So most of us forget the evil times through which we have passed, and only the glamour remains. Thus filtered by the sands of time the pleasant waters run clear into the well of memory.

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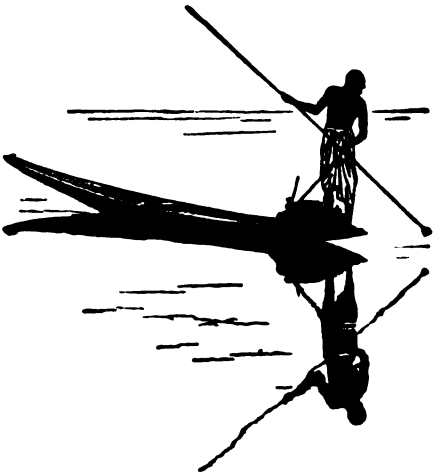

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